Mother, US Embassy fear for Schilling's life

STORY ON PAGE A2

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2001 ★ 64 PAGES 5 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 117 ₱15

13-0 PART II !
PA'NO NA YAN, ERAP?

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Petron rolls back LPG prices** NEWS / A5
- **Drop in oil prices seen** BUSINESS / B5
- **Export slowdown to cut growth** BUSINESS / B1
- **Bush tells Sinos: Return crew** WORLD / A11

It's 13-0 again vs Erap

Supreme Court throws out Estrada's claim to the presidency

"BEREFT of merit," rules the Supreme Court in dismissing deposed President Estrada's motion for reconsideration here shown in a file photo taken on Jan. 10 in San Miguel, Bulacan. VAL HANDUMON

BY DELMAR CARIÑO, FRANK CIMATU
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau
AND CATHY C. YAMSUAN

BAGUIO CITY—For the second time, the Supreme Court yesterday threw out Joseph Estrada's claim to immunity from prosecution and upheld the legitimacy of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency.

As it did on March 2, the tribunal voted 13-0 to dismiss Estrada's motion for reconsideration of its ruling that he resigned and vacated his post at the height of People Power II. It said Estrada's contentions, contained in the twin motions filed by his lawyers, were "bereft of merit."

In Manila, Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio said the decision had removed legal obstacles to the filing of the seven complaints—all with allegations of plunder—pending before the Ombudsman against Estrada.

The high court had earlier stopped the Ombudsman, Aniano Desierto, through a 30-day temporary restraining order, from filing plunder charges against Estrada before the Sandiganbayan.

He said the special preliminary investigation panel was to convene last night "to resolve the seven complaints."

But Justice Secretary Hernando Perez expressed doubt that the decision was final and executory, noting that the high court did not indicate so in the 43-page resolution written by Associate Justice Reynato Puno.

Rule 52, Section 2 of the revised rules of court, however, provides that no second motion for reconsideration of a judgment or final resolution by the same party shall be entertained.

IT'S/ A18

Arrest Erap now, militants urge gov't

WITH the Supreme Court's 13-0 vote upholding its previous ruling, militant groups yesterday urged the government to immediately arrest Joseph Estrada and take all steps to prevent his escape from the country.

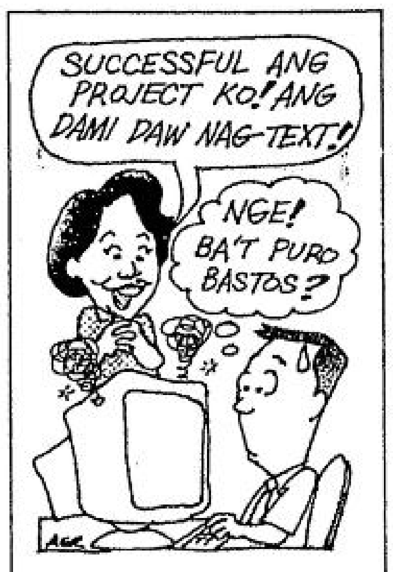
"The next step is to arrest him," said Kilusang Mayo Uno chair Crispin Beltran. "There has been too much delay already. This should not drag into the elections."

On the campaign trail, senatorial candidates of the administration's People Power Coalition (PPC) were jubilant.

"So the die is cast. *Tapos na si* Erap (He is finished). He is history," said Wigberto Tañada.

His colleague, Joker Arroyo, said the tribunal had not only put to rest any and all questions about the legitimacy of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency but also showed that it saw through Estrada's supposed ploy of getting immunity from suit.

ERAP/ A18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NGE! BA'T PURO BASTOS?
AGE

Texters overwhelm 'TXT GMA'

BY DONNA S. CUETO

THOUSANDS of text messages flooded the Presidential Action Center (PACE) on the first day of Malacañang's "TXT GMA" project causing some of the power supply boxes for the computers to bog down.

All kinds of text messages kept coming in from 6 a.m. to noon yesterday, causing an overload.

The messages ranged from questions about policies of President Macapagal-Arroyo, to expressions of support, to birthday greetings, to traffic

TEXTERS/ A18

Suspect in Dacer case abducted, says NBI chief

BY MICHAEL LIM UBAC AND DONA PAZZIBUGAN

A SUSPECT in the disappearance of Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver, Manuel Corbito, was abducted by unidentified armed men from his home in Indang, Cavite, last Sunday, according to Director Reynaldo Wycoco of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Wycoco identified the suspect as Digo de Pedro, who was alleged to have strangled Corbito before he was set on fire along with Dacer on Nov. 24.

At least five other suspects in the Dacer case—Jovencio and Renato Malabanan, Margarito Cueno, William Lopez and Rommel Rollan—are also nowhere to be found.

The five suspects, who are residents of Buna Lejos in Indang, were all assets of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) during the Estrada administration. They reportedly witnessed the killing of Dacer and Corbito.

SUSPECT/ A18

Pro-Estrada men eyeing House seats via party list

BY GERALD G. LACUARTA

THE HOUSE of Representatives could soon be packed with people associated with ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Records of the Commission on Elections showed that quite a number of the nominees-representatives listed by party-list groups were people closely identified with Estrada. They could become congressmen if their party-list groups win in the May 14 elections.

Among them are former Presidential Flagship Projects Secretary Robert Aventajado of the party-list group Bagong Bayani Organization and Estrada lawyers Edward Serapio and Fernando Chua of the group Sports and Health Development Foundation.

Estrada's former Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Undersecretary Narciso Santiago Jr. could also become congressmen if their party-list groups, the Philippine Local Autonomy Movement

PRO-ESTRADA/ A17

REQUIEM FOR HEROINE ERIK ARAZAS

President Macapagal visits with the family of 1Lt. Mary Grace Baloyo on Tuesday in Bacolod City and confers the Medal of Valor on the co-pilot of the PAF plane that crashed over Mabalacat, Pampanga, last week. Baloyo steered the plane from hitting the homes of 200 families. *(Story on Page A4.)*

Death penalty suspended under GMA, says De Villa

BY ARMAND NOCUM AND JEROME ANING

THE DEATH penalty has effectively been suspended for the duration of President Macapagal-Arroyo's three-year term, Executive Secretary Renato de Villa yesterday said.

"There are no executions because the President automatically commutes the death sentences of all cases which are already going to be carried out or before they are carried out," De Villa said over dzRH.

"She has not said exactly" that she is against the death penalty, "but her recommendations for those due for execution speak for themselves," he said.

De Villa said the President "has the power to commute death sentences into lower penalties such as life imprisonment. That is what is happening now."

The Crusade Against Violence (CAV) and the Volunteers Against

DEATH/ A6

DOJ to summon solon linked to drug trafficking

BY CATHY YAMSUAN AND PHILIP C. TUBEZA

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice will subpoena Quezon Rep. Marcial Punzalan and other officials who are being linked to drug trafficking in the province.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said the subpoenas would be served once his department completed the gathering of evidence on the case.

Perez said on radio station dzBB that he would form a panel to spearhead a probe of allegations by Jonathan Perpiñan that Punzalan, Lucena City Mayor Ramon Talaga and provincial police director Charlemagne Alejandrino were coddling suspected Quezon drug lord Athel Alcala.

"The subpoenas will serve as an opportunity for Punzalan and company to explain what they know about (drug) smuggling and to give them the chance (to comment) on Perpiñan's statements," Perez said in Filipino.

"Once we have all the evidence, we will form the panel to handle the investigation," he added.

In a statement, Punzalan urged the justice department to immediately constitute the panel.

He reiterated that the accusation against him was a demolition job to discredit the candidacy of his wife Lynette for a congressional seat in the second district of Quezon.

"The charge was meant to immobilize me from campaigning for my spouse and her party," Punzalan said.

The Catholic priest who helped expose the alleged collusion between Quezon officials and Alcala disclosed that the police were harassing his staff.

Fr. Raul "Puti" Enriquez said his enemies were also spreading "old baseless rumors," like the one about him fathering a child, to destroy his credibility and discourage other po-

DOJ/ A6

Why Quezon is a haven for drug traffickers

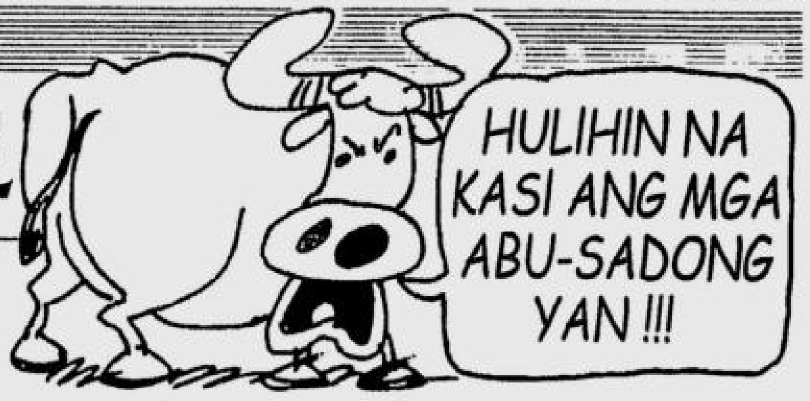
BY VOLT CONTRERAS

ESPECIALLY in summer, Quezon is featured in pictorials and travelogues as a colorful tourist destination.

But the drug scandal implicating one of its congressmen, a city

WHY/ A6

Second FRONT PAGE


HULIHIN NA KASI ANG MGA ABU-SADONG YAN !!!

Orly backs all-out war vs Abu Sayyaf

FORMER Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado yesterday welcomed the announcement of an "all-war" policy against the Abu Sayyaf but he added government should also impose a genuine gun ban in Mindanao.

"The renewed push against the kidnap-for-ransom group also opens the way for the government to enforce a total gun-ban not only in Sulu, but also across Mindanao," said Mercado, an opposition candidate for the Senate.

The remark was contained in a press statement issued a day after President Macapagal-Arroyo announced that her administration would be launching an "all-out" offensive against the Abu Sayyaf, a group that had threatened to behead American Jeffrey Craig Schilling as a "gift" to Ms Macapagal on her birthday tomorrow.

"This timely and well-considered move to finally end the banditry of the Abu Sayyaf is also an opportune time for the government to implement a genuine election period gun-ban as mandated by the Commission on Elections," the former defense secretary said.

DOOMED HOSTAGE

Ma, embassy fear for Schilling's life

THE MOTHER of American captive Jeffrey Schilling yesterday appealed to the Abu Sayyaf to spare her son as the United States Embassy expressed fears that the terrorists would make good their threat to behead Schilling as a birthday gift to President Macapagal-Arroyo tomorrow.

In an appeal broadcast by dzRH radio, the California-based Carol Schilling told the Abu Sayyaf: "Jeffrey is my only son, my only child. Please release him immediately. In the name of Allah, the most merciful and most compassionate, I call upon you to show more mercy and compassion to Jeffrey by releasing him safely and unharmed."

She said the group had nothing to gain from harming her son.

Abu Sayyaf spokesman Abu Sabaya said the group would ignore the appeal.

'Execution is set'

"The execution has been set," Abu Sabaya told dzRH radio by telephone.

SCHILLING

"We take the threat seriously," said US Embassy press attaché Thomas Skipper.

While Skipper said the United States considered the kidnapping an internal matter that the Macapagal-Arroyo administration could handle, he nevertheless urged the Philippine government to "resolve the matter" immediately.

"We believe Schilling should be released immediately and without conditions," Skipper told diplomatic reporters.

President Macapagal-Arroyo rejected the Abu Sayyaf threat on Monday.

Without ideology

She described the Abu Sayyaf as criminals without an ideology and ordered an all-out war against them.

Abu Sayyaf gunmen abducted Schilling when he visited the extremists' jungle hideout in Jolo island on Aug. 28 last year.

Schilling and Roland Ullah, a Filipino scuba diving instructor snatched from a Malaysian resort, are the remaining hostages from an Abu Sayyaf kidnapping spree last year in which dozens of foreigners and locals were taken captive.

Rocky Nazareno with a report from AFP

No time frame for all-out war

BY CARLITO PABLO

NO time frame was given the Armed Forces in its mission to pursue and annihilate the Abu Sayyaf bandits, AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said of President Macapagal-Arroyo's all-out war order.

"The main objective is to rescue the hostages alive if possible and neutralize the terrorists," Adan said.

Despite the order, no mass troop movements were evident early yesterday. Armed Forces Chief Gen. Diomedio Villanueva was to fly to the south to speak with local military commanders.

Adan explained that the President's use of the word "annihilate" was figurative.

Annihilate

"Don't take it literally, it might conjure images of civilians being killed," Adan said.

In a separate briefing in Camp Aguinaldo, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said the military would ensure the safety of innocent civilians in the operations to be launched against the bandits.

But Golez stressed that "the policy of annihilation is going to be implemented."

Military commanders have noted how Abu Sayyaf members have been able to blend into the civilian communities and escape previous punitive military operations against them.

"We anticipate tactical problems but we have to take risks," Adan said.

The AFP estimates that there are around 300 "hard core" Abu Sayyaf members operating in Sulu.

Expectedly, the Abu Sayyaf yesterday said a military assault against them was doomed to failure and again taunted the President with threats to kill captive Jeffrey Schilling and give her the head for her 54th birthday.

Spokesman Abu Sabaya said his group has survived intense assaults under two former presidents and will stand up to Ms Macapagal's attack.

Old story

"It is really an old story," Sabaya said, speaking to RMN radio on a satellite phone from a hide-out. He said his group has resisted periodic fierce assaults throughout its 10-year-old fight "but we are still here fighting the government."

Ms Macapagal ordered the "all-out war" on Monday, hours after the Abu Sayyaf said they would behead Schilling, who was taken hostage in August last year.

She said she would "never, ever" negotiate with the Abu Sayyaf, calling them "money-crazy bandits." She also said she would fully prosecute Abu Sayyaf members, even if they voluntarily surrender.

She has offered amnesty to surrendered fighters from the other groups.

Senate Majority Leader Sen. Renato Cayetano yesterday expressed support for the President's all-out offensive against the Abu Sayyaf, saying the group was nothing more than a bunch of "gangsters and kidnappers."

"It is important for us to clean Mindanao of bandits," he said.

"Regardless of whether Schilling would be sacrificed or not, the order of the President is right and I support it 100 percent," Cayetano said.

Notoriety

The Abu Sayyaf shot to international notoriety last year after seizing dozens of hostages, many of them foreigners, in daring raids. It released all but two hostages—Schilling and Filipino dive resort worker Roland Ullah—for reported multimillion-dollar ransoms.

Southern regional military spokesman Col. Fredesvindo Covarrubias said hundreds of soldiers have been fighting Abu Sayyaf in Jolo and Basilan sporadically for months and are poised for larger assaults.

The Army faces difficulty, however, in eradicating the group which uses hit-and-run tactics, is familiar with the terrain of mountains and jungle and can drop their weapons to blend in with the civilians.

"They will never confront assaulting troops," Covarrubias said. "They just fight to slow the troop movement and then scamper in all directions."

Sabaya said yesterday the Abu Sayyaf might spare their hostage's life if Mohamad Al Ghamdi, the Saudi Arabian ambassador, agrees to meet with them.

"What I would like to tell the ambassador has something to do with their country's interests in the Philippines and the Saudi people themselves," Sabaya said, refusing to elaborate.

An official at the Saudi Arabian Embassy, who refused to give her name, said Ghamdi was out of town on previously arranged business and wouldn't return to Manila until Friday—after the scheduled execution of Schilling.

She said she "doesn't think" Ghamdi plans to talk with the Abu Sayyaf. *With a report from AFP*

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Clashes usher in truce with MILF

COTABATO CITY—Moro rebels began observing a unilateral ceasefire early yesterday after a series of last-minute skirmishes left one rebel dead, officials said.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front spokesman Eid Kabalu said the 12,500-member guerrilla force suspended armed hostilities with the government from 1 a.m. Tuesday. The truce is open-ended.

President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a similar unilateral truce in February to draw the rebel leaders back into talks after a serious flare-up last year in the 22-year mostly low-intensity rebellion.

The two sides are to hold formal talks within three months.

The military repelled three small-scale guerrilla raids in central Mindanao on Monday, local military spokesman Maj. Julieto Ando said.

A MILF guerrilla was slain when the group launched simultaneous raids on three small military detachments near the town of Barira, Ando said. No military or civilian casualties were reported.

Military ordnance experts also disarmed three land mines planted on a dirt road leading to a military outpost in the area, Ando said.

Back to Abubakar

Displaced residents were streaming back into Camp Abubakar, the MILF headquarters bordering the town of Barira, Ando said.

Government forces last year seized the camp and nearly four dozen other rebel training bases.

Some of those who returned were unarmed men who wore the MILF crest on their military-style jackets. Military spokesmen said guerrillas were free to return with their families as long as they did not carry guns.

The government estimated in February that half of the some 600,000 people displaced by the military operation had yet to return.

This week the government sent two tractors to Abubakar to help the Muslims restore their abandoned farms.

Kabalu, the MILF spokesman, said rebel leader Hashim Salamat would "make himself available to the public once a peace agreement has been signed."

Salamat last year fled the 10,000-hectare Camp Abubakar shortly before it fell into government hands. The MILF has rejected suggestions that Salamat fled abroad.

Kabalu told reporters a special envoy to Ms Macapagal had offered Salamat a meeting with the President during the formal peace talks.

Confidence building

"If that meeting helps build confidence, then the MILF will surely support it," Kabalu said.

The Philippine government signed a peace settlement with a second Muslim separatist faction, the Moro National Liberation Front in 1996.

Ms Macapagal has said she would pour government funds to develop the areas of the south, which are among the poorest in the country.

In a briefing at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said Salamat will be allowed to enter Camp Abubakar as a plain civilian and not as a combatant, much less as chair of the MILF.

And if Salamat insists on entering Camp Abubakar with his armed guards, the military will have no choice except to arrest him, said Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

In separate briefings at Camp Aguinaldo, Golez and Adan stressed that the presence of armed MILF men inside Camp Abubakar and other former MILF camps will not be tolerated.

The two were reacting to reports that Salamat will be marching into Camp Abubakar with 200 armed escorts.

While Golez doubted if Salamat is really intent on doing this, he said that "the government will not allow that."

"He can enter Abubakar as a plain civilian, a citizen," Golez said. "He cannot go in with armed escorts."

Golez said the government is not returning the camps to the MILF and will instead develop them into "areas of peace and development."

The AFP has a force of one Army brigade inside Camp Abubakar, former general headquarters of the MILF. *AFP with a report from Carlito Pablo*

Puwersa assails KL pact

THE OPPOSITION Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Puwersa ng Masa (LDP-PnM) yesterday expressed its indignation over some of the details of the agreement signed by the Macapagal administration with the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

In a statement, LDP-PnM spokesman Jesus Crispin Remulla also urged the government to "fully bare" the content of its agreement with the MILF as he expressed apprehension that some secret "protocols" had been reached with the Muslim group that would affect the future security situation in the region.

Remulla also castigated the administration for ignoring the demand of the military officers on the ground as well as the civilian population in the region that they be consulted prior to making any concession with the rebel group.

"Despite the deliberately vague wordings of the March 23, 2001 agreement with the MILF, it is clear that a return of the MILF camps had been reached by the two sides," Remulla said.

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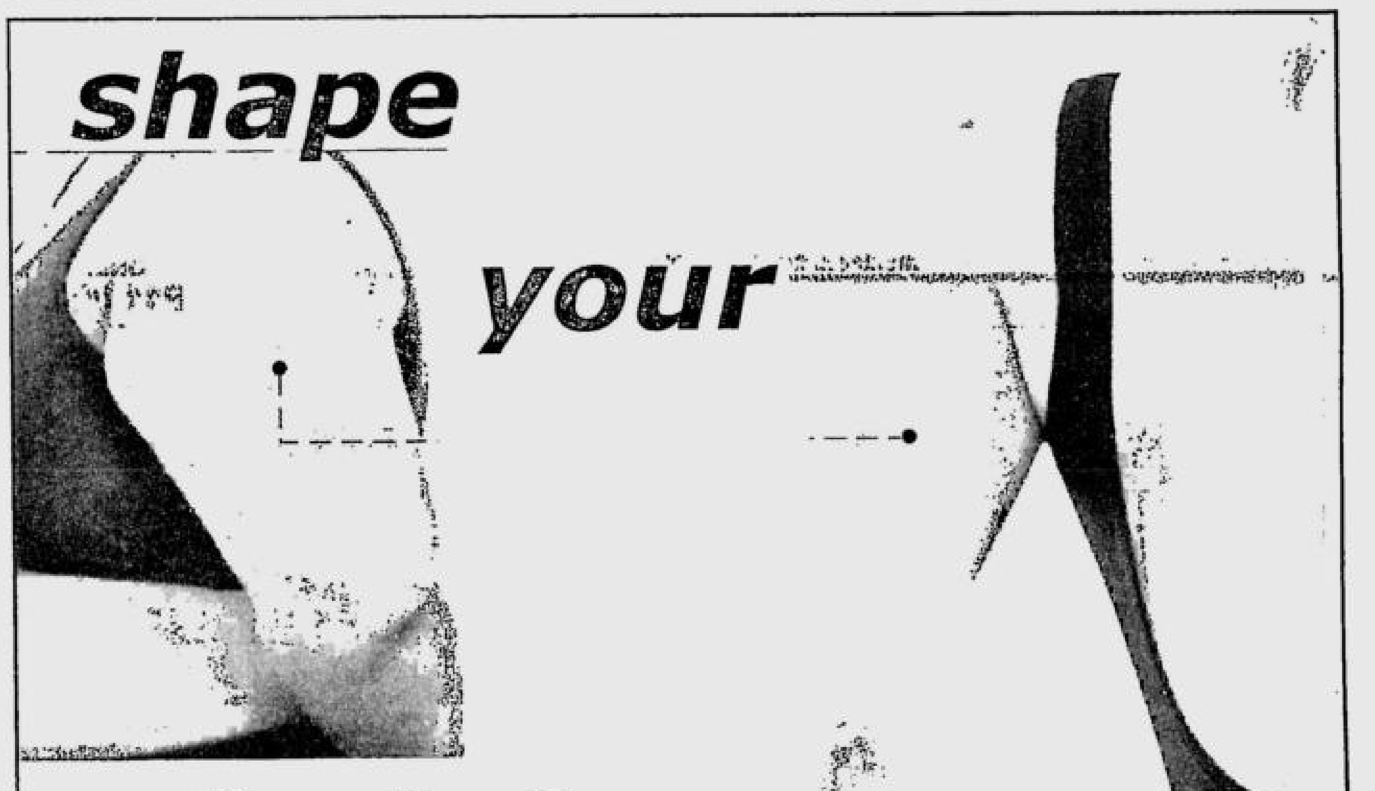

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Palace appeals body affirms ban on 'Live Show'

BY DONNA S. CUETO

AS expected, the Malacañang appeals committee yesterday upheld the ban on the controversial movie "Live Show," permanently revoking its permit for public exhibition.

In a one-page decision, the committee headed by presidential spokesperson Renato Corona ordered the "permanent banning" of the movie.

"After evaluating the movie in its entirety as well as its alleged merits and demerits, this Committee hereby renders a verdict of disapproval," the decision, signed by Corona, said.

Two of the three members of the committee voted for an "outright ban," while one member "voted for extensive cuts on both scenes and dialogue."

Corona said the cuts would "have virtually destroyed the movie."

"Premises considered, this Committee hereby orders the permanent banning of the aforesaid movie and therefore revokes the permit issued by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board for its public exhibition," the decision read.

It was dated April 2, 2001. The review was conducted on March 26.

Corona explained that there was a public outcry against the "allegedly pornographic film which prompted the President of the Philippines to suspend its permit and to refer the film to this Committee for a review or assessment," after a run of about two weeks.

He noted that last year, "Live Show" was banned for public viewing by the first MTRCB review committee which previewed it under then chair Armida Siguion Reyna.

There was, however, a second expanded review committee that overruled the first decision, voting to give a permit for the public exhibition of the film.

The movie, however, was not immediately shown in the public theaters and was exhibited only about the second week of March 2001.

Yesterday, Corona said that the committee members, including Press Secretary Noel Cabrera and Council for Catholic Women's Laity chair Sonia Ronda, no longer met to discuss their votes.

He said the two just faxed to him their votes, including the explanation for their decision.

Corona would not say who among the members of the committee opted for extensive cuts on the film.

But reporters noted that it was Corona who raised the possibility of cutting some of the movie's objectionable scenes and lines.

Corona said that the committee was essentially a presidential committee, but reasoned out that it would not necessarily toe the President's line.

He, however, said that new MTRCB chair Alejandro Roces could consider the proposal by the former MTRCB chair for the setting up of "for adults only" movie theaters that could allow the exhibition of banned films.

He said they were also considering raising the age of maturity for watching adult movies, from 18 to 25 years old.

Even before the committee made a ruling, the President has already declared her decision to ban the film as "non-negotiable."

She described the movie, directed by Jose Javier Reyes, as "soft porn." The movie was basically a social commentary on the kind of poverty that was forcing persons to become *toros* and *toreras* or live sex performers.

Gloria confers medal of valor on heroine pilot

BY CARLA P. GOMEZ
PDI Visayas Bureau

BALOYO

BACOLOD CITY—Air Force 1st Lt. Mary Grace Baloyo was yesterday posthumously conferred a medal of valor and a promotion for sacrificing her life to save more than 200 families in Mabalacat, Pampanga.

As she handed the medal to Mary Grace's parents, President Macapagal-Arroyo informed them that their daughter had been promoted to captain.

Ms Macapagal spent 20 minutes with the Baloyo family at the residence of the heroine's grandmother where the wake was being held.

"Mary Grace is a heroine twice over. This is a modest gesture of our appreciation," Ms Macapagal told Annie and Romeo Baloyo.

Mary Grace was co-piloting a PAF plane amid heavy rain over Mabalacat town near Clark Field on March 26 when the aircraft experienced engine trouble. Mary Grace refused to eject, piloting the OV-10 reconnaissance and bomber aircraft away from residential areas until it exploded and crashed into a vacant lot. She was killed instantly.

Her act of heroism saved the members of some 200 families residing near the crash site.

At the height of the all-out war against Moro rebels in Mindanao last year, Mary Grace was one of the PAF pilots who led the attack on Camp Abubakar, Maguindanao, the main Moro Islamic Liberation Front encampment.

She was awarded an Aviation Cross for her Mindanao exploits.

One of only six women combat pilots in the Philippine Air Force, the 26-year-old Mary Grace could have gone on to train as a fighter pilot. The command has a total of 32 women pilots in the service.

In her speech, Ms Macapagal called Mary Grace a "hero not only in Bacolod but in the whole Philippines."

"She sacrificed her life to save more than 200 families," she said in Ilonggo.

She praised Mary Grace for her patriotism and courage "which has inspired all of us."

After her meeting with sectoral groups in Negros Occidental, Ms Macapagal immediately proceeded to the wake of Mary Grace on Adelfa Street.

In a talk with the President, Romeo Baloyo asked if Ms Macapagal could give scholarship grants to his two sons—Peter Ian, 22, and Cesar Ian, 19.

He said it was Mary Grace who had been paying for her brothers' education. Peter Ian is studying computer technology while Cesar Ian is enrolled in a dentistry course.

"We are getting old and we might not be able to continue sending them to school," Romeo told the President.

Ms Macapagal was about to reply when Bacolod City Mayor Luzviminda Valdez butted in and offered to provide for the scholarships, saying the city government had the funds for these.

RESCUED RANDY HORMILLOSA

Dian Fabrega (center) cries on the shoulder of a relative at the Coast Guard headquarters where she and 28 others, mostly students, were taken following their rescue on Tuesday. Their vessel, M/B Seagold, capsized in Tablas Strait in Romblon.

Southern sorties for PPC

BY C.AVENDAÑO

THE PRO-ADMINISTRATION People Power Coalition will be devoting the last few weeks of the election campaign period to Mindanao and some Visayan provinces, Sen. Renato Cayetano said yesterday.

In fact, he said, a campaign sortie to Zamboanga and Pagadian cities has been scheduled this week.

Cayetano was reacting to allegations by Sen. Vicente Sotto, campaign manager for the opposition Puwersa ng Masa, that the PPC plans to skip Mindanao, where the opposition believes it has dominance, and rig the elections instead to ensure an administration victory.

Cayetano, PPC campaign manager for the National Capital Region, dismissed as "black propaganda" Sotto's claim that the PPC was planning a *dagdag-bawas* (vote-padding and shaving) operation in Mindanao.

"They're conditioning the minds of the people that indeed it's very possible to shut out the PnM," Cayetano said.

With only 40 days left of the campaign period, Cayetano said that PPC candidates would spend half the time in Mindanao, which represents 15 percent of the total voting population.

Comelec chief clips Tancangco's powers

BY GERALD G. LACUARTA

COMMISSION on Elections chair Alfredo Benipayo yesterday issued a memorandum effectively clipping the powers of Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco over the Comelec's Printing Committee.

Benipayo designated two officials as his "representatives" in the committee.

The Comelec chair had earlier blamed Tancangco for the delay in the printing of election returns for the May 14 elections.

Benipayo's memorandum did not say whether Tancangco was being stripped of her chairmanship of the committee. But his representatives—Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr. for the Printing Committee and Director Estrella de Mesa for the printing pre-qualification bids awards and evaluation committee—were given "full powers to supervise, coordinate manage and control the operations for and in behalf of the chair on the mentioned committees."

Tancangco took a defiant stance. In her reply, she said she would give Tuason full access to all documents, information and activities of the Printing Committee "for coordination and harmony but not for purposes of supervision, management and control" of the committee.

Three other commissioners—Rufino Javier, Ralph Lantion, and Mehol Sadain—sided with Tancangco, saying Benipayo's order was void and illegal because it was not supported by a corresponding en banc resolution.

Comelec insiders said Tancangco, Javier Lantion and Sadain would be able to reverse Benipayo's order since they constituted the majority in the en banc.

Benipayo also designated Commissioner Ressureccion Borra, a vocal critic of Tancangco, as his representative in the Reception and Verification Committee with the same "full powers."

Javier said Benipayo could not unilaterally amend the en banc resolution designating chairmanship of the 12 working committees, including the Printing Committee.

"His duty is to execute the orders and resolutions of the Commission, Benipayo is not the Commission," Javier said.

For his part, Sadain suggested that Tuason be authorized only to "coordinate, consult and work side by side" with Tancangco.

Tancangco said Benipayo's order was "patently illegal" as it gave Tuason full authority over the Printing Committee.

"Frankly, I do not mind having a colleague as Chair Benipayo's representative to coordinate with the committee . but for another official to supervise, manage and control the work of the committee would certainly fly in the provisions that place the committee under the direction of the Commission," Tancangco said.

Joker eyes Erap with envy

BY J. JAVELLANA

CEBU CITY—If there's one thing that Joker Arroyo envies about Joseph Estrada whom he helped oust, it is the former President's ability to travel in style while campaigning for senatorial candidates of the opposition.

Arroyo was told by People Power Coalition campaign director Paul Aquino that Estrada's Learjet took off just moments after the chartered plane carrying him and other PPC candidates landed at the Mactan Air Base on Monday afternoon.

"How come Erap has a Learjet when we are using a propeller-driven plane?" Arroyo shot back at Aquino inside a coaster.

"That shows that we are the *masa* and he is not," cheered Liwayway Vinzons Chato.

The PPC hired a YS-11 20-seater plane for the 4-day Visayan swing which takes them to Cebu City, Catarman, Northern Samar; Ormoc in Leyte; Bacolod City; Pagadian, Zamboanga and Dipolog.

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Petron rolls back LPG price

OIL industry major Petron Corp. rolled back liquefied petroleum gas prices by P1.50 per kilogram, or a total of P16.50 per 11 kg cylinder, effective midnight last night.

This would mean that average retail prices of LPG would go down to P255 and P265 per cylinder, from between P270 and P280.

"The (price adjustment) follows the drop in international contract prices of LPG from $332.50 per metric ton in February to less than $300 per metric ton in March," said Virginia A. Ruivivar, acting Petron corporate communication manager.

Another oil industry major, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. said yesterday it would "competitively match any price movement made by Petron or any competitor in the retail LPG business, according to a statement from Shell vice president Reynaldo Gamboa.

Prices of LPG, which is mostly used for cooking by Filipino households, were last increased in early February, by the same amount as today's rollback.

The country imports about 50 percent of its LPG needs.

Petron has no plans, however, of rolling back the prices of other petroleum products, said Ruivivar.

She explained that LPG prices follow a different "seasonal cycle" from other fuels.

Ruivivar said that LPG contract prices normally go down at this time of year.

"This can move up again by May or June," she said.

She added that Petron was holding the prices of other petroleum products because it was still monitoring the effects of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' decision to cut back oil production by a million barrels per day.

"The cutback has just been implemented and we would see its effects at the end of April," Ruivivar said. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

Gloria orders cut in power rates

BACOLOD CITY—Consumers can expect much lower electric bills next month.

President Macapagal-Arroyo announced yesterday a 20-centavo per kilowatt hour reduction in power rates on top of the suspension of the power purchase adjustment earlier announced.

The President made the announcement of the power rate reduction at a multi-sectoral forum in Tacloban City and a sectoral meeting in Bacolod City yesterday.

In Bacolod, Ms Macapagal said the people must not be punished just because the government needed to cut costs in order to reduce the budget deficit by P80 billion.

She said the country had a budget deficit of P225 billion that needed to be brought down to P145 billion so interest rates would go down.

But while sacrifices were needed to save P80 billion, Ms Macapagal said "this must not be done to the point of punishing the people."

She blamed the PPA imposition, which consumers have assailed, on the Estrada administration.

"This increase has been imposed since December. This was not noticed (by the consumers) since the increase was gradual," she said.

The PPA is a surcharge that the National Power Corp. passes on to electric companies to cover the increase in the cost of fuel, power from independent power producers and the foreign exchange rate fluctuations. These surcharges are in turn passed on by electric companies to consumers.

With the suspension of the PPA, the Napocor said about P9 to P10 billion would be added to the P225-billion budget deficit.

Energy Secretary Isidro Camacho said that a reduction of power rates by 20 centavo would add another P600 million to the deficit.

"We will not only suspend the PPA, we will also reduce power rates by 20 centavos per kilowatt hour until a reasonable solution (to the Napocor problem) is found," the President said. *Carla P. Gomez, with a report from Vicente S. Labro, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Buan free before April 8

BARRING last-minute major hitches, Army Maj. Noel Buan will be released by communist rebels before April 8, according to Silvestre Bello III, chair of the government panel negotiating with the underground National Democratic Front.

Bello said that Buan would be handed over to the government panel by the Melito Glor Command of the New People's Army as part of confidence building measures for the scheduled resumption of peace talks.

"We're looking at a date on or before Palm Sunday," Bello said in a phone interview. "It was the NDF's commitment that Buan will be released on the first week of April and we're working on this."

Quite coincidentally, the NDF negotiating panel led by the former priest Luis Jalandoni is also scheduled to arrive in Manila on April 8 for a dry run of the formal resumption of talks.

The two panels will participate in a conference set April 18 under the sponsorship of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and the National Council of Churches of the Philippines which will allow the parties to air their positions on issues related to the talks.

The two parties had previously agreed to tackle social and economic reforms as the starting point of the resumption of talks.

Bello noted that the release of Buan is not a precondition to the formal resumption of talks scheduled on April 27 either in Norway, Sweden or Finland.

"Buan will be released on humanitarian grounds," Bello said.

Sources familiar with the details of the release said an NPA custodial force will initially hand over Buan to a team of the International Committee on the Red Cross, which, with the assistance of lawyers, will determine if Buan's right under international humanitarian laws were properly observed by the rebels.

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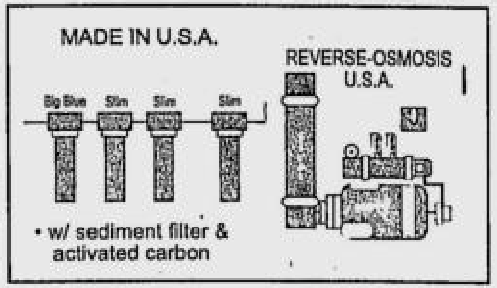

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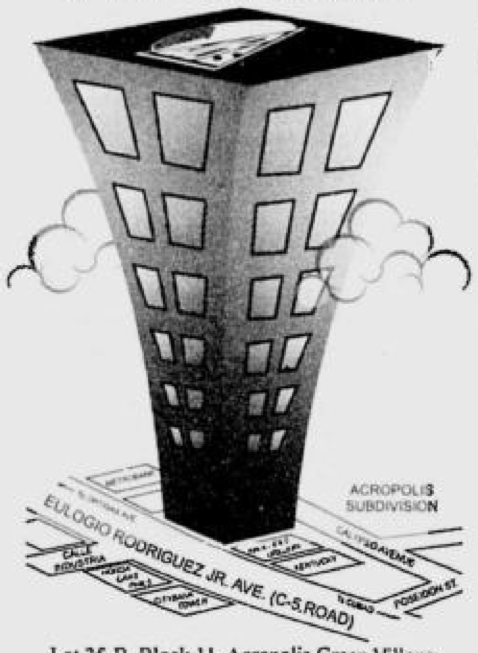
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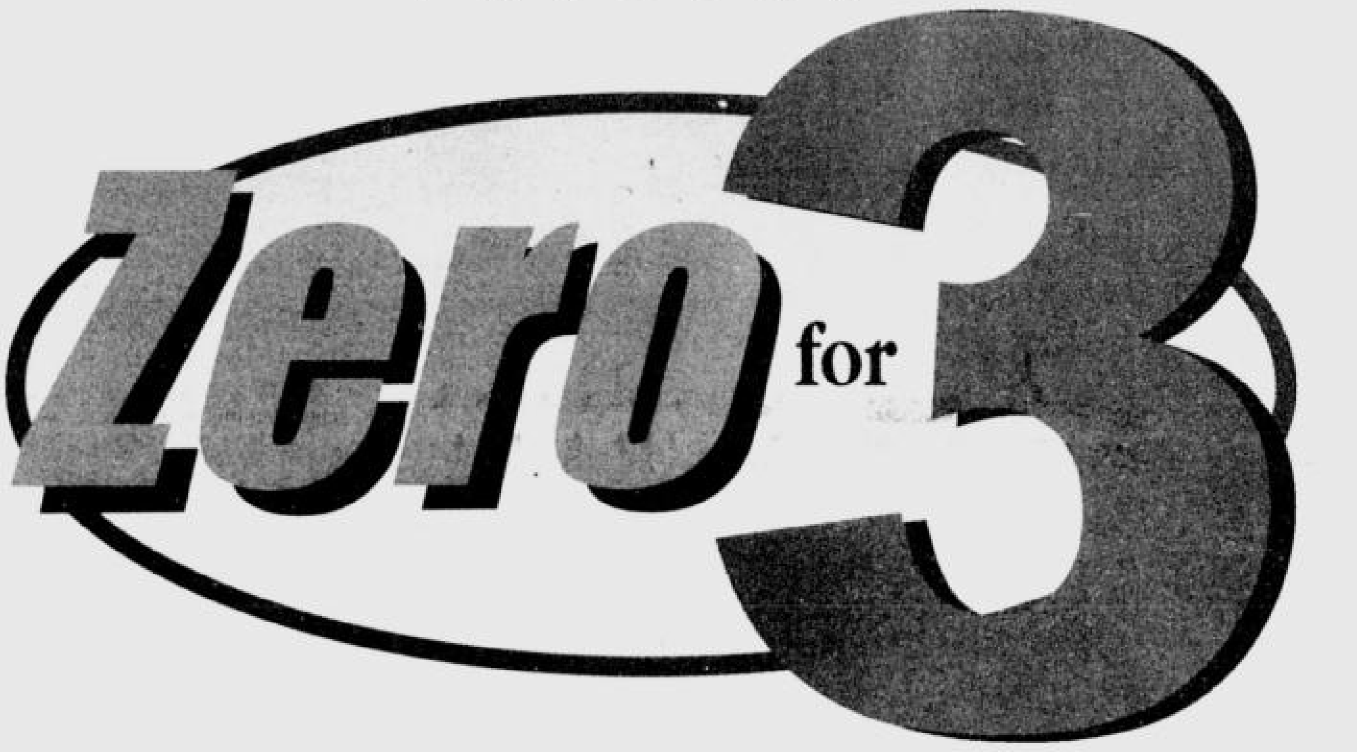

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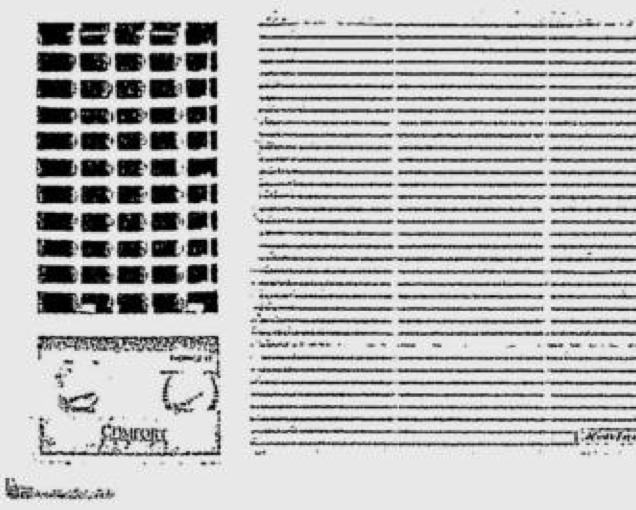
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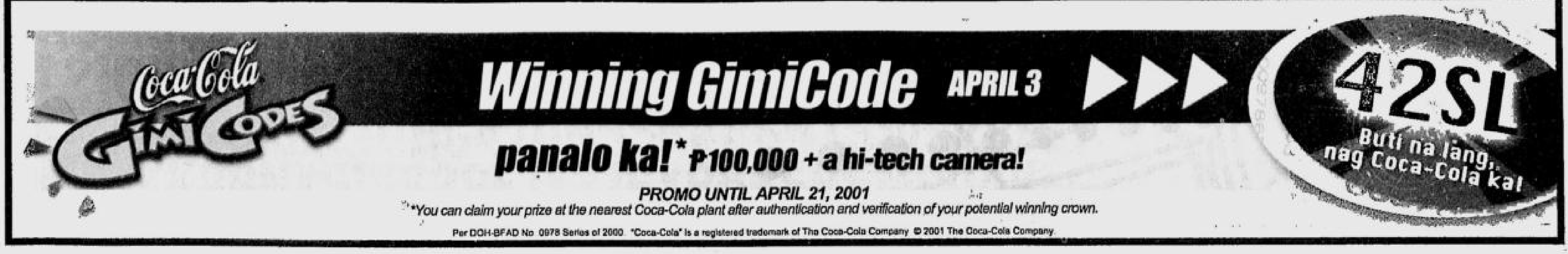
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Death penalty suspended under GMA, says De Villa

(From page A1)

Crime and Corruption (VACC) expressed fears that heinous crimes would escalate and that vigilante groups would rise if Ms Macapagal continued to commute death sentences.

"We will ask her to reconsider and we would want to know the real reasons behind the commutations," VACC chair Dante Jimenez said.

He said Ms Macapagal should expect howls of protest from anti-crime groups during the Peace and Order Summit in Malacañang on April 18.

Debt of gratitude?

CAV president Carina Agarao described Ms Macapagal's commutation orders as "an abuse of executive clemency."

Agarao wondered whether the commutation of death sentences was Ms Macapagal's way of repaying *"utang na loob"* (debt of gratitude) to the Catholic Church, which is against the death penalty.

Ms Macapagal's term in office ends in mid-2004.

The Philippines executed seven people by lethal injection in 1999 under the administration of Joseph Estrada, who was deposed by People Power II on Jan. 20.

The man responsible for the penal system in the Macapagal Cabinet, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, has already made it clear he is against capital punishment.

A citizens' monitoring group said this week that 30 people were sentenced to death in the Philippines last month, raising the number on death row to 1,720.

Crimes such as aggravated rape, drug dealing and aggravated kidnapping are subject to capital punishment.

De Villa stressed though that scrapping the death penalty had not officially become law.

"If that is indicative of the policy, then it is in that direction, but until she (Ms Macapagal) comes out with it and is precise about it herself, I cannot presume that that is the policy," he said.

Jimenez said "both the law and the victims were disregarded" when the President issued her commutation orders.

Wholesale commutation

Agarao said "we are practically being deprived of (the law) because the President has circumvented it, which punishes with death all those convicted of heinous crimes."

"In the exercise of executive clemency, individual cases should be carefully examined and evaluated to determine if the convict deserves a commutation," Agarao said. "What happened here was a wholesale commutation. We doubt if each case was studied," she said.

"When a person commits a murder, rape or any heinous crime, he crosses a line from where he can never return," Agarao added. "He should no longer be part of the society."

Jimenez warned that those involved in large-scale drug trade, which is punishable by death, would grow bolder because the death penalty had been practically scrapped.

Anti-crime groups were formed in the early '90s due to the outbreak of violent and sensational crimes. They and other sectors successfully lobbied Congress, which passed the Death Penalty Law in 1994. *With a report from AFP*

DOJ to summon Quezon solon linked to drug trafficking case

(From page A1)

tential witnesses.

Enriquez also lashed out at senatorial candidate Noli de Castro and the crew of his weekly TV program "Magandang Gabi Bayan (MGB)" for claiming that they did not find any credible witness to last year's biggest drug haul in Bignay II, Sariaya town.

The priest, the Lucena diocese social action coordinator, criticized the broadcaster for saying that he only wanted to see himself on television.

De Castro had said that the MGB did not air the segment on the drug haul because its crew only got "hearsay" from their interviews with Sariaya residents.

Noli lying

"He is lying. If this is how shallow he sees the growing drug menace and how he will respond to it, then I don't know what will happen to the country, especially if he is elected to the Senate," Enriquez told the INQUIRER.

Enriquez said the MGB crew interviewed at least three "direct witnesses" who saw what happened when drug traffickers unloaded 365 kilos of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) on a beach at Barangay Bignay on the night of Aug. 24 last year.

He dared ABS-CBN Channel 2 to show the edited and unedited video footage of the MGB's interviews.

Risking lives

"We are very disappointed that he sees this only as a mere publicity stunt when we are risking our lives to fight the drug problem," Enriquez said.

Enriquez and running priest Fr. Robert Reyes picketed the TV station Monday morning to protest the non-airing of the interviews.

"We are not necessarily running against ABS-CBN. We are asking Gabby and Gina Lopez to order the showing of that segment. Why did the story not see the light of day?" Reyes said.

Reyes said De Castro "has a lot of explaining to do."

He said he sent a letter of complaint to De Castro on March 27 about the issue but the senatorial candidate did not respond.

"No response came. So before this complaint is overtaken by the madness of the election campaign, we decided to stage the rally," Reyes said.

At the picket, the protestors brought with them a statue of the Mater Dolorosa, or the Sorrowful Mother of Jesus, while Reyes and Enriquez held placards.

One of them read: "ABS CBN. *Asan ba ang shabu*? Cash *ba* Noli? (Where is the shabu? Was it in cash Noli?)."

Enriquez said that people from ABS-CBN had contacted him and tried to set a dialogue with him and Reyes after the rally. But he said the TV station should first air the MGB interviews.

"We are waiting for them to show the footage. If they are sincere and honest, they should be humble enough and not engage in character assassination," Enriquez said.

In Ormoc City, reelectionist Sen. Franklin Drilon said the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP) should investigate allegations that MGB suppressed the drug report.

"The KBP should investigate it because of the possible suppression of the truth," Drilon said. *With a report from Juliet L. Javellana*

Why Quezon is a haven for drug traffickers

(From page A1)

mayor and the provincial police chief has exposed the dark underside of a province famous for its beach resorts and folk traditions like the Pahiyas (harvest festival).

Quezon is a security nightmare because of its sheer breadth. Its shoreline, which covers about half of Luzon's Pacific coast, offers an ideal gateway to illegal drugs shipped in by Chinese syndicates from China.

"Lack of sea patrols has made it a favorite drop-off point for drugs which eventually find their way to Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon," said Rudy Rodolfo, a former police chief of Lucena City.

The communist insurgency has also "made local police somewhat hesitant to cover as much area as possible, making (the situation) conducive to drug trade," he said in an interview.

"It's now so easy to buy drugs in Lucena City alone where there are at least 50 known big-time drug pushers," said Rodolfo, who worked as a confidential immigration agent during the Estrada administration.

In August last year, for example, authorities seized 365 kilos of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) from six Chinese suspects caught unloading the drugs from a speedboat off the coast of Barangay Bignay II in Sariaya town, 20 km from Lucena.

It was said to be the year's single biggest drug haul.

Rodolfo, who headed the Lucena police department from 1993 to 1995, recalled at least two other shabu shipments in Quezon that slipped past the government's dragnet.

At least 50 kilos were successfully unloaded in 1999 in Barangay Gisgis, also in Sariaya, and another undetermined volume in Barangay Talawtalaw in Lucena, where the suspects abandoned their speedboat, he said.

Drugs from China are usually stored first in the villages in the Polillo group of islands. From there these are sneaked into "local dealers" in Lucena, then to Metro Manila, Bulacan and other places.

After retiring from police service, Rodolfo worked as a confidential agent for the Bureau of Immigration, reporting directly to then BID Commissioner Rufus Rodriguez.

In April 2000, he alerted the BID and the National Bureau of Investigation about the existence of an alleged Chinese drug trafficking ring that had taken root in Quezon.

He identified the alleged gang members as Johnny Valentino Sermonia, Philip Sermonia (alias Teresito del Rosario or Chow Chong from Fujian province, China), brothers Kin Sun Chow and Kin Wong Chow, and Zeng Xiu Lian (a female, alias Zheng Gian Wa.)

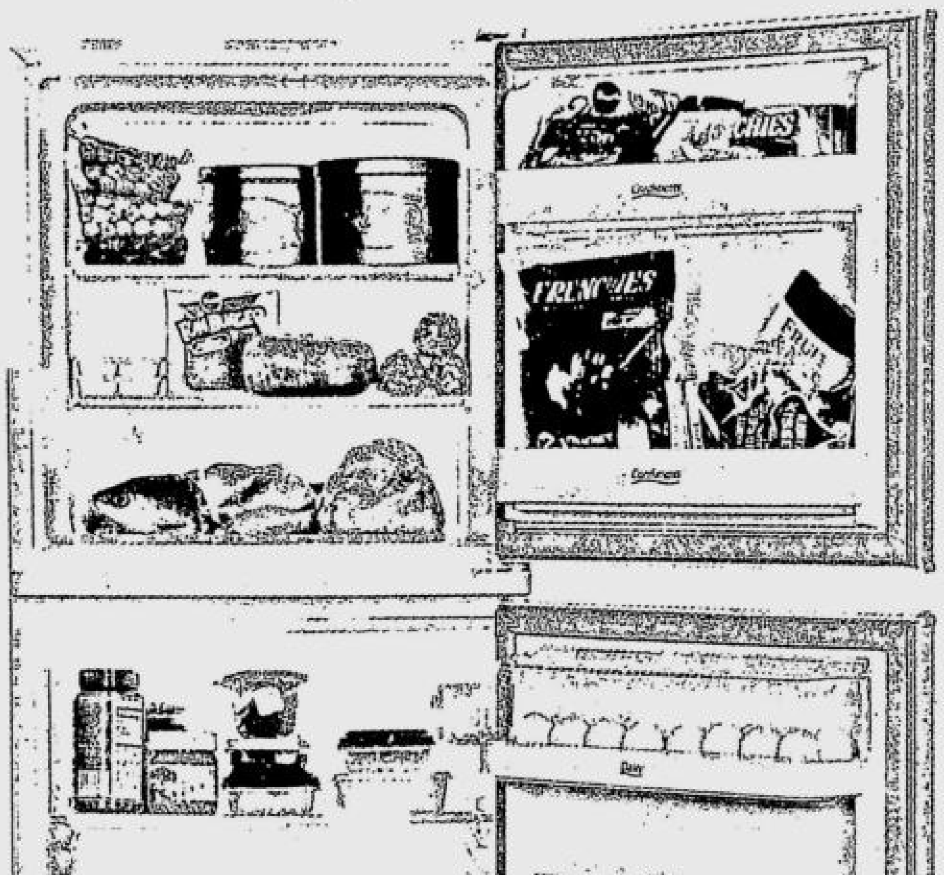
Armed with a search warrant, the NBI raided the syndicate's alleged business front—the Ideal Piggery Farm in Barangay Mayuwi, Tayabas, Quezon.

But due to an "intelligence leak," he said, authorities failed to find any drug in the premises.

Instead, the five suspects were held for illegal possession of firearms after the raiding team found an unlicensed Armalite and a .22 cal. rifle in the farm.

The suspects eventually managed to gain temporary liberty after each posted a P25,000 bail, according to Rodolfo.

In the report he submitted to Rodriguez before the raid, Rodolfo alleged that the Sermonia group had taken over the "centralized distribution" of shabu entering the country through Quezon.



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FAILURE IN SELF SUFFICIENCY

Farmers demand scrapping of IRRI

By Cynthia D. Balana and Christine Gaylican

DESPITE the success of the Green Revolution and improved genetic rice engineering, a lot of people in Asia, including those in the Philippines, are still starving and their number has increased by 11 percent over the last 30 years, according to non governmental groups.

The Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura (Masipag) said the International Rice Research Institute has not been successful in achieving food sufficiency in Asia despite pushing research for rice genetic engineering to the detriment of small farmers.

Because of this, the farmers' groups have asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to abolish the IRRI because it has not contributed to the country's rice sufficiency.

In fact, the country will import some 350,000 metric tons of milled rice this year from Thailand and Vietnam because local production could not meet local demand.

"The grim scenario of a future succumbing to malnutrition, famine and deaths due to over-exploding global population without enough food to eat, caught them up in an illusion that IRRI's technology is indeed the most sensible path to take," said Abigail Verdillo, advocacy officer of Masipag.

'Gene revolution'

Today's "gene revolution" has its root from IRRI's industrial farming model of the Green Revolution—both aimed at bringing food security to the world.

But Masipag said that the history of Green Revolution would show that poverty and hunger still persist in Asia despite the leaps and bounds in grain production and yields in many developing countries.

According to Elenita Dano, executive director of the South East Asia Regional Institute for Community Education (SEARICE), the number of starving people in Asia is still increasing each year based on the latest statistics released by the Food and Agriculture Organization.

"These bitter lessons glaringly tell us that increases in food production will not solve hunger," Dano said.

She added that technological innovations in agriculture is the wrong solution to the problem of hunger which is accurately rooted in unequal distribution of wealth and inequitable access to resources.

"After 41 years, IRRI has nowhere near achieved food-sufficiency in Asia," said Rafael Mariano, chairperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

"Instead, it has restructured sound traditional agricultural practices to become dependent and subjugated to chemical inputs which are products of TNC-controlled agri-business," he added.

Mariano stressed that IRRI's chemical dependent seeds and intensive capital input high yielding varieties (HYVs) had eroded the traditional rice varieties (TRVs) of Filipino rice farmers and had a negative impact on the ecological system of agricultural lands.

Vitamin A rice

"Irri has produced the high-yielding variety of rice and now the Vitamin A rice, which are very dependent on fertilizers," said Masipag's farmer-member Leopoldo Guilaran in a press conference. "This had a grave impact on the country's agricultural lands."

Guilaran said that there are safe and alternative methods of farming, which are less harmful to farmers and consumers alike. "However, IRRI has insisted on their agricultural method and still refuses to acknowledge them beyond mere lip service."

"Transgenic rice does not answer the more pressing needs of farmers nor is it able to enhance our strengths and resources," said Guilaran, a farmer-member from Negros Occidental.

The farmers groups also urged the President to look carefully into the mandate of the IRRI, considered as Asia's agriculture research center located in Los Banos, Laguna, especially its "immunity" from being accountable to any serious accidents or complaints from workers.

History of art lecture

ART historian Dr. Luciano P. R. Santiago will talk on the history of art academies established during the 19th century in the fourth of the National Museum's Lecture 2001 series on Saturday, April 21, at 10 a.m.

Starting with the first of these academies, the Academia de Dibujo, established by Damian Domingo, Luciano will discuss three other schools set up during the period as well as the Filipino art scholars which they spawned and nurtured.

The lecture will be held at the Tambunting-Villonco Hall, 4th floor, Museum of the Filipino People (former Finance Bldg.) at Rizal Park. Call Joy at 8190046 for information.

Lumawig, 86

EDUCATOR Corazon Ferrer-Lumawig, mother of PR executive Joy Buensalido, passed away on April 2 at the age of 86.

A former Rizal assistant superintendent of schools, she was also a Papal Awardee and a parish worker in Parañaque.

She left behind son Jolan (former San Miguel Corp. senior vice president), daughters Thess and Joy, daughter-in-law Grace Tañedo-Lumawig, sons-in-law Virgil Soriano and Dr. Adrian Buensalido; grandchildren Ginno and Myra Diaz, Eileen Diaz, Rita and Steven Digerlando, Boozy and Caloy Sta. Ana, Jomick Lumawig, and Jondi, Jason, Monique Buensalido; and great grandchildren.

The body lies at the Royal Room of the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels at Dr. A. Santos Ave. (formerly Sucat), Parañaque.

Interment will be announced later.

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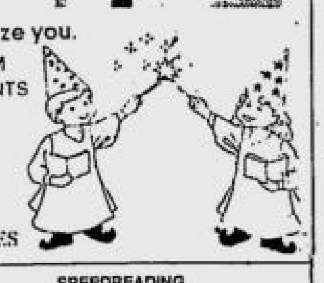

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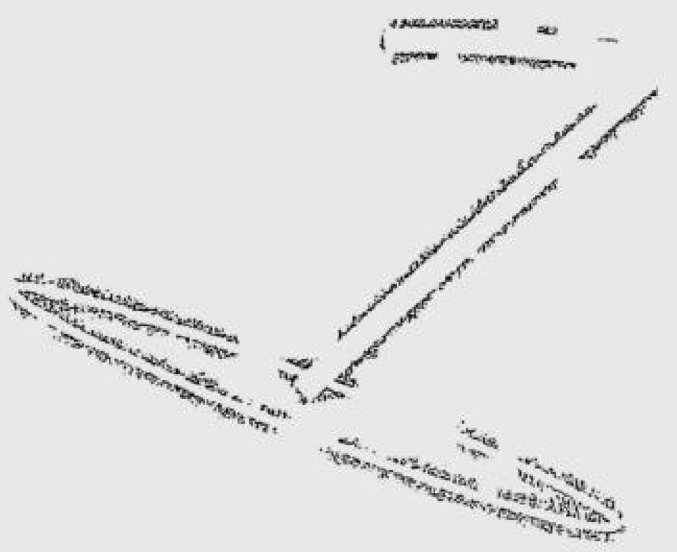

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OPINION

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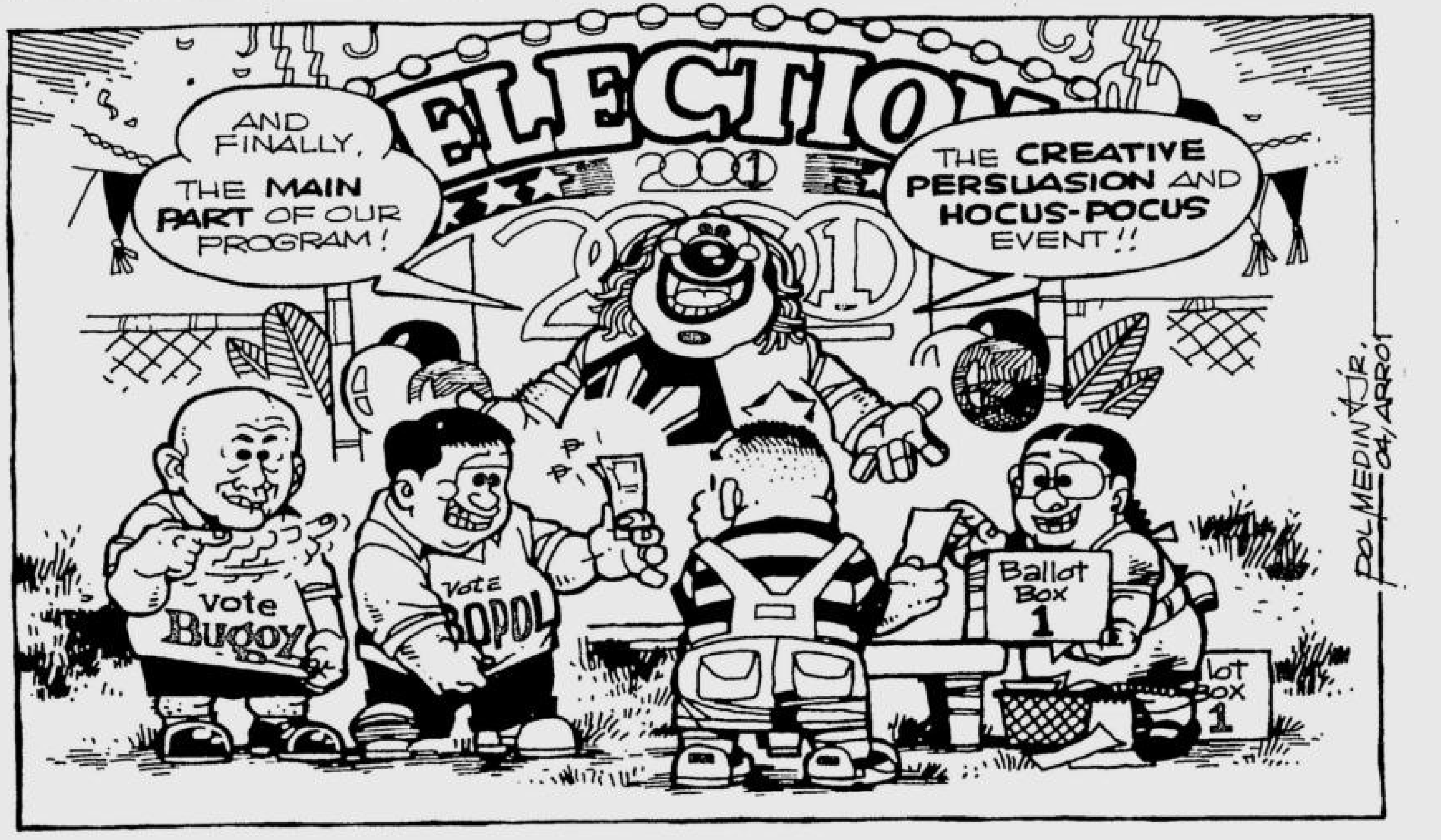
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Unsolved

EDITORIAL

THE ARREST last March 28 of two farmers who claim to have witnessed the murder of public relations executive Salvador Dacer and his driver in November last year has not solved the case. "The case is not closed," Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said. "This is just a breakthrough because we still don't know why this was done and who ordered them to do this."

It's good to know that for once top government officials are not rushing to claim success where success has yet to be fully achieved. Perez, like a good whodunit fan, knows that a murder mystery is never solved until the mastermind is unmasked and his motives are fully explained. And at this point, the identity of the brain behind the crime remains in the realm of speculation. In fact, there is yet no conclusive proof that murder has been committed. Forensic experts are still trying to determine whether the burnt teeth and bones recovered near a creek in Indang, Cavite, were those of Dacer and Manuel Corbito.

So far this is what government investigators have gathered from the account of witnesses. Dacer and Corbito were abducted by several armed men at the corner of Osmeña Avenue and Zobel Roxas Street near the boundary of Manila and Makati on Nov. 24. Among the abductors were four police officers assigned to the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force: SPO4 Marino Soberano, SPO3 Mauro Torres, SPO2 Jose Escalante and SPO1 Crisostomo Purificacion. The two victims, gagged and blindfolded, were taken by their abductors to Indang that same day, according to the two farmers, Alex Diloy and Jimmy Lopez. At around 3 or 4 o'clock that same afternoon, the farmers said, Supt. Teofilo Viña, PAOCTF head in the Visayas, called the four police officers apparently to give his final orders. That night at around 8 p.m., according to Diloy, the captives were brought near a creek, where they were strangled with a wire by Torres, William Lopez and a certain Diego. Then the killers put the bodies on top of a pile of wood and old tires, doused the pyre with gasoline and then set it on fire.

For two months during the administration of President Estrada, the investigation of Dacer's disappearance led nowhere. This only tended to support speculations that the administration was responsible for the abductions, especially in the light of reports that Estrada and Dacer had a heated exchange of words in Malacañang two nights earlier over the demolition job the PR man was supposed to be doing against the embattled administration. Now the identification of Viña and some PAOCTF agents as principal suspects serve to strengthen suspicions that top officials of the previous administration had a hand in Dacer's disappearance.

But who? While no official in the Macapagal administration has ever mentioned his name, former PNP Director General Panfilo Lacson has been doing all he can to deny his own involvement in the case. On the same day Perez presented the two farmers to the media, Lacson, who is running for a Senate seat under Estrada's Puwersa ng Masa, said he had received reports that they had been tortured into confessing their participation in the crime. But he said his people were still investigating the report. His campaign manager, Angelito Banayo, said they have witnesses "to prove that there is an orchestrated conspiracy" by the administration to blame Lacson and Estrada for the Dacer case. Not only that, Banayo claimed that it was former President Fidel V. Ramos who could have ordered Dacer's abduction. "Maybe they discovered that Bubby Dacer would join Estrada," he said.

Estrada voiced the same suspicion, noting two "suspicious" incidents involving his predecessor. First was Ramos' scheduled meeting with Dacer, which Estrada said was intended to establish an alibi. Second was the revelation of a letter written by Dacer where he mentioned alleged threats to his life.

Ramos, of course, is not above playing dirty political games. Politics was written all over his meeting with Perez last Monday ostensibly to share what he knew about the Dacer case. But this is getting to be ridiculous. Estrada and Lacson are talking of conspiracy, abduction and murder and suspects in a case they couldn't solve when they had all the power and responsibility to solve the crime. If they had witnesses, then they should have sent Ramos and his co-conspirators to jail as early as December when pressure was mounting to solve the Dacer kidnapping. Who knows, it might have helped shore up public support for Estrada's tottering administration.

Granted that the administration doesn't have the purest of intentions, Lacson still has a lot of explaining to do. He cannot shirk responsibility for the activities of the PAOCTF and its agents, for that agency was his own creation and the officers who served under it were handpicked by him.

Party-list system is being abused

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE PARTY-LIST representative in Congress was put in the 1986 Constitution to give representation to the marginalized sectors of society, such as farmers, tribals, fishermen, etc. The justification is that those who get elected as regular members of Congress are the well-to-do elite who can afford the enormous expense of an election campaign. A party-list representative needs only a tiny fraction of the votes cast to be elected. The system is supposed to even up representation in Congress. At least that is the theory.

But that is not what is happening in real life. So many characters are trying to get in through the backdoor of Congress via the party-list system. So many groups have been accredited by the Commission on Elections to have candidates run in the elections this May, and many of them are not marginalized. They belong to the same elite who dominates Congress. And their candidates are the same *trapos* of the regular political parties. Would you believe that Lakas-NUCD, the major administration party, has been included by the Comelec in the party-list system and its candidates are politicians who have been defeated in previous elections? So is the LDP, the major opposition party. So do a lot of other groups one can hardly call "marginalized." Do you consider Creba, the association of wealthy real estate developers and brokers "marginalized"? Is the Philippine Medical Association, the association of doctors, "marginalized"? Under the accreditation system approved by the Comelec, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines can have its own party-list candidates even if three-fourths of the members of Congress are already lawyers.

Obviously, this defeats the intent of the Constitution. "Marginalize" is defined by Webster's New World Dictionary this way: "to exclude or ignore, esp. by relegating to the outer edge of a group or by diverting the public's attention to something else." Does Lakas-NUCD, LDP, Creba, PMA and other similar groups fall under this category? These groups are taking advantage of the incompetence of the Comelec to defeat the intent of the Constitution. Even the squatters don't need representatives because many politicians are already coddling them.

Under the Comelec's loose rules, the taxpayers will have to pay for so many representatives of parties who don't deserve to be there. Easily, each additional congressman costs the taxpayers approximately P100 million a year in salaries and allowances, pork barrel, cost of office space, furniture and supplies, air conditioning, electricity, travel, mail, phone bills, salaries of staff, bodyguards and drivers, etc. What we need are less, not more, congressmen. Congress will run better with much less members than it has now. Legislators don't work for their constituents but for themselves once they are elected into office, anyway. Imagine how much money we can save if we reduce the number of congressmen, money we can spend directly for their forgotten—and really marginalized—constituents.

With so many legislators, it takes so long to have needed legislation pass through Congress. Somebody estimated that it costs the taxpayers an average of another P100 million to have one bill hurdle Congress, not counting the additional millions they will have to pay if the bill is a tax measure, or if the bill, like the Omnibus Power Bill, seeks to transfer the people's property to private owners.

Congress churns out so many laws that they sometimes contradict one another and it takes so many lawyers, judges and justices—not to say a lot of money—to unravel the mess. That is why the wheels of justice grind so slowly. It takes even the Supreme Court so long to decide cases because it is so hard to make the contradictory laws, and their interpretations by the court agree with one another. And that is why there are sometimes miscarriages of justice.

There are so many existing laws that a great many of them are not enforced at all. So what is the use of enacting them if they cannot and are not enforced?

Congress is in session continuously, except when it is time for them to travel abroad—at the people's expense—and they call it a recess. To save money, we should imitate other countries whose legislatures meet only when called upon by the chief executive to discuss proposed laws. These bills are accumulated and when there are enough, the legislature is called to session and discuss the bills one after another, then immediately adjourn until called to another session. This way, the members of the legislature have more time to listen to their constituents.

But going back to the party list, the Comelec should do something about the abuse of the system.

This Comelec is probably the most inefficient of all the poll bodies we have had so far. It promulgated rules on posters but it is unable, or unwilling, to enforce them. Why make rules at all if you can't enforce them? Look how ugly the political posters have made our surroundings. Taxpayers will spend more millions just to have them removed.

* * *

You won't see this column for about three weeks because it is time for my annual vacation. I will try to send columns when I can from wherever I am. I will be back in May, in time for the elections.

* * *

Comments are welcome at asisee@pacific.net.ph

Interventions

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

AMANDO Doronila says ("Analysis," PDI, 4/2/01) we should be consistent. "When Cardinal Sin issued a pastoral letter calling on Estrada to resign because he had lost the 'moral authority' to govern, did the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility protest? Did the Left protest? Did the artists protest?" So why are they now protesting Jaime Cardinal Sin's new moral crusade?

Doronila says as well that the quality of the opposition to Cardinal Sin's initiative may be gleaned from Armida Siguion-Reyna's participation in it. "We are not sure what she means by 'artistic expression.' Is the film 'Live Show,' showing people copulating, an example, if not a model, of artistic expression? Marilou Diaz-Abaya, who has criticized the film industry for producing films with less than inspiring quality, may not agree with her."

And finally Doronila says: "The Church cannot be dismissed as a key influence in Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration or even in the country's political affairs…any more than the military can."

I beg to disagree.

If the CMFR, the Left and the artists did not protest Cardinal Sin's fulminations against Erap, it was not because they were being inconsistent or exercising selective judgment, it was precisely because they were being consistent and applying a universal principle. It's simply not true that the lines between Church and State are completely blurred and you may not tell a basically moral intervention from a politically partisan one. The Church fulminates against corruption and tyranny, it is well within its rights to do so. The Church endorses specific candidates in elections, it is meddling in the affairs of the state. I've always thought that was what made the Catholic Church more democratic than the Iglesia ni Cristo. It does not force its faithful to vote for candidates on pain of hellfire or expulsion.

The Church says some public officials are not fit to rule, it is well within its rights. It lobbies for its own protégés, it is meddling in the affairs of state. The Church says artificial contraceptives are sinful, it is well within its rights. It prevents the sale of condoms, it is meddling in the affairs of the state. The Church thunders in pulpits that all movies that show screwing are bad for the souls of the faithful, it is well within its rights. It moves to ban movies like "Live Show," it is screwing freedom of expression.

The last two are particularly important. I myself do not particularly mind that Cardinal Sin shouts his head off about the evils of "Live Show." But I do most grievously mind that he has gotten it banned. I do most grievously mind that he has prevented those who want to watch it from watching it. I respect his right to think and say the things he does. That is freedom expression, to which even a prince of the Church is entitled. I do not respect his desire to remove it from public view. That is abuse of power, from which a democracy may not survive. We don't watch out, we'll have a religious police, not unlike the *mutawa* of the Arab countries.

Siguion-Reyna is not the issue, banning "Live Show" is. Mariou Diaz-Abaya herself obscures the problem when she reduces the protest to Siguion-Reyna vs Cardinal Sin, Mother Lily vs Ms Macapagal. That is silly. Any protest movement will always draw people and groups with different agenda. Even People Power II did. This one does. But Joel Lamangan is there, Mel Chionglo is there, Gil Portes is there, Maning Borlaza is there, Soxy Topacio is there. All of them fought Erap. Why single out Siguion-Reyna as representing their group? Who's exercising selective perception here?

You want a representative of that group, single out Joey Reyes, the person at the heart of this controversy. He not only fought Erap, he worked tirelessly to get other show-biz personalities to do so, at a time when it was perilous for them to do so. Indeed at a time when other people were saying Edgardo Angara gave the Erap administration a new lease on life.

I agree 101 percent with Abaya's diagnosis of the disease of the local movie industry. But the question is: is that problem solved by banning a movie like "Live Show"? Is that problem solved by allowing the Catholic Church to dictate its agenda on the movie industry? That is the issue, not Siguion-Reyna. Doronila says Abaya should have a different opinion of "Live Show" being an example of artistic expression. Ah, but that *is* the point. She does *not*. Nowhere in her utterances or statements will you find her condemning "Live Show" as part of the trash she rails against. In fact, I dare any one with any artistic integrity in this country to do so—so it could pursue them like an albatross for the rest of their lives. Never mind Anding Roces. He will never be an artist in 10 lifetimes.

So what are they saying here basically, that we should sacrifice a lofty movie that deals with trashy lives to make local movies better? Like how?

As to Ms Macapagal calling "Live Show" soft porn, all I can think of is Josef Stalin going around the art museums of the former Soviet Union decreeing which was art and which was not. It shows precisely the infinite dangers of politicians, moralists and bureaucrats (or the bureaucratic-minded) presuming to sit in judgment over artists. That is a surefire recipe for philistinism.

Doronila says the Church and the military may not be dismissed as an influence in Ms Macapagal's administration. Agreed. But they may most certainly not be allowed to control it. They may most certainly not be allowed to prevent other voices from enlightening it. At the very least, that is so because the Church and the military were not the key players that brought this administration to being. The people who flocked to Edsa did not do so because Cardinal Sin summoned them, they did so because their conscience impelled them. And the people who marched to Mendiola did not do so because Cardinal Sin drove them to it, they did so even though Cardinal Sin tried to stop them from it. Ms Macapagal may feel beholden to Sin and Gen. Reyes for her position. But the rest of us feel beholden only to the NGOs and POs, the CMFR and PCIJ, the Left and the business community, the artists and students for giving us a new lease on life.

At the very most, it cannot augur well for a presumably democratic order that it should be willing to alienate artists, dismissing them as a cantankerous few, to embrace the arms of the Church and the military, and humor them like jealous lovers. Which in fact is what we've always done.

Is it any wonder this country is what it is?

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

North Luzon depressway

COMMENTARY

Leandro V. Coronel

THE NORTH Luzon Expressway is a killer highway.

Stretching some 80 kilometers from Balintawak to Mabalacat, Pampanga, the expressway has to be the worst-run toll road in the world. And it's one of the most unsafe, with fatal accidents occurring with frightening regularity (two deadly ones just in the past few weeks).

The North Luzon "Depressway" is dangerous because of a combination of bad toll road management, bad driving conditions and bad drivers.

Let's begin with the physical conditions. The road's surface is uneven, a rough patchwork of repairs done over the years. One minute you're sailing along smoothly and the next you're all over the road on a bumpy bronco ride. The road's shoulders are mostly dirt, like crater-filled lunar surface. In the rainy season, potholes seem strategically placed, deliberately testing the motorists' eyesight and driving skills. Physical hazards are strewn all over the place, with debris of all kinds posing a constant danger.

As a regular user of the expressway (I'm originally from Pampanga), this writer sees the ever-present risk of accidents. Once I saw ahead of me a two-meter-long 2x2 piece of wood in the middle of the highway. At the same time, I caught in my rear-view mirror the outlines of a patrol car of the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) coming behind me.

"Aha," I said to myself, "let's see what these PNCC guys will do." After passing the ill-placed piece of lumber, I slowed down and stopped on the shoulder. As I suspected, the patrol car passed the debris as if it wasn't there. I flagged down the patrol car and asked the two PNCC patrolmen why they didn't do anything. They said they were sorry and would go back to retrieve the debris. I said they should but their inaction already proved they were indifferent about such potential safety hazards.

The PNCC, the operator of this toll facility, seems unable or unwilling to ensure that the expressway is safe and in good physical condition. Patrol cars cruise along the highway but it's an exercise that's done seemingly for show, a process of going through the motions of monitoring road safety.

Patrol crews stop at sites of accidents. But all they do is inquire perfunctorily about the condition of the people involved and then summon towing crews who have a monopoly of servicing the road. PNCC staff do very little (*baka magusot ang uniporme*), they're more like bystanders than officers of a company that rakes in millions of pesos a day in toll fees. They don't wave traffic through, they just leave motorists to their own devices which, with Filipino drivers, means instant chaos and anarchy. The PNCC allows the same chaos to happen at toll exits where traffic bottlenecks reduce flow-through traffic to a standstill. The PNCC should but doesn't seem to know that a uniformed officer waving motorists through helps greatly in easing the flow of heavy traffic.

And then there are the drivers. Many people have no business driving because they simply don't know traffic rules, safety precautions and road courtesy. On the North Luzon Expressway, many motorists think they're on a Grand Prix speedway. They zoom in and out of lanes to get ahead of everybody else, drive on the shoulders to pass others (which is extremely dangerous because the one being passed doesn't expect to find an overtaking vehicle on his right side), and pose as moving hazards. Knowing they won't get apprehended, fined or jailed, many drivers turn into instant Mika Hakkinens.

Then there are the slowpokes, usually heavy trucks loaded with gravel or sand, like turtles in a never-ending race. Have you been caught behind one such behemoth trying to pass another? The whole process feels like eternity. Meanwhile, you've lost your voice screaming at the over-ambitious driver making like one lumbering rhino passing another.

There are just too many bad drivers and too many dilapidated vehicles that should have been thrown into the junkyard years ago. The Land Transportation Office is to blame for exposing the public to unnecessary danger. Why can't vehicles be inspected properly before they're reregistered? In advanced countries, the acquisition of drivers' licenses and vehicle inspection stickers is strictly regulated. In the United States, for example, driver training is a part of the high school curriculum and vehicles must be in tip-top functional shape before they're approved as roadworthy.

In the United States, a fact-finding commission would have already been mandated to look into the operations of the PNCC and the Luzon toll road because of the regularity of accidents there. Columnist Art Borjal has written that the North Luzon Expressway collects P3 million a day in toll fees (that's P90 million a month!). With all that money, why can't PNCC improve the condition of the expressway, the competence and service of its staff and the regulation of traffic and driving behavior.

It's hard to believe the driving public doesn't complain more about the PNCC's mismanagement of the Luzon Expressway, where there aren't systematic advisories on traffic conditions (there are only crude, handwritten notes at the toll booths, like HEAVY TRAFFIC IN MEYCAUAYAN, CAUSE: VOLUME). It's hard to believe why people don't complain when they get toll tickets that don't show the right point of origin, which gives the PNCC the opportunity to cheat and misdeclare their revenues.

The PNCC's new management under chair and CEO Luis Sison must do something to stop the North Luzon Expressway from continuing to be a death trap. But it would be foolish for us users to hold our breath waiting for that to happen.

Leandro V. Coronel, a former spokesperson of the World Bank in Washington, D.C., now lives and writes here.

Against the odds

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE PAST few days, I've been writing about the need to support women running for office because in the first place they have had to overcome countless barriers, not least of which is the perception that women don't have the "stomach" for the supposedly "down and dirty" world of politics.

But with two women presidents so far, it would seem that the Philippines would be more ready than most other countries to create a critical mass of women in political office.

This notion will be tested in Pasig this May, what with Soledad C. Eusebio, wife of the incumbent mayor, running for her husband's office with another woman, incumbent vice-mayor Lorna Bernardo, as her running-mate. Are Pasig residents willing to have their city headed by a two-woman tandem for the next three years? Well, why not? So many other local governments in the country are headed by male tandems, and governed by all-male councils are they not?

In Bacolod, the lone female candidate for mayor is the incumbent Vice Mayor Joy Valdes. A close political ally of hers is Councilor Celia Flor, who is gunning for her third term. Many residents had entertained the possibility of Flor running for vice mayor, but the idea was eventually junked because it was felt that Bacolod was not ready for a female mayor AND vice mayor. "I can't do that to Joy," remarked Flor when I asked her about it, meaning even Valdes' chances to succeed incumbent Mayor Verdeflor would be endangered if they ran as a team.

Still, let's see what happens in Pasig. We could yet see the dawning of truly gender-fair politics in these parts.

* * *

ANOTHER woman who's defying the odds is Melon Recto Silverio, candidate for congressional representative in the first district of Makati. Melon, a relative unknown, at least as far as national politics are concerned, is somewhat of a "David" in the Makati congressional contest as she's up against two formidable opponents. They are publisher/TV personality Teddy Boy Locsin and former MTRCB chair and movie producer Armida Siguion-Reyna. While both Locsin and Siguion-Reyna support "returning" Mayor Jojo Binay, Melon is running under the ticket of incumbent Vice Mayor Edu Manzano.

Isn't she afraid of confronting the formidable "Binay machine" in the country's wealthiest city? "It's a myth," says Melon dismissively. "I think Binay is in for a surprise in these elections."

A Makati resident since 1969, Melon has been described as the candidate of the city's elite, since she is most visibly backed by Doña Bea, the Zobel-Ayala matriarch, Mercy Tuason and Melon's colleagues in the Forbes Park barangay council. "I'm not part of the super rich," Melon protests, "Teddy Boy and Armida are both much wealthier than I am."

But she does admit to being a sometime "socialite" in the years soon after she moved with her family to Makati, counting Tingting Cojuangco, among others, among her circle of bosom friends. That friendship with Tingting, which had lapsed after Tingting began to devote much of her time to her post-graduate studies, was rekindled in 1983, after Tingting dropped by her home to borrow a vehicle since hers had conked out after a motorcade from Tarlac following the assassination of Ninoy Aquino.

* * *

THE NINOY assassination, and the years of protests it fueled, would be Melon's baptism into activism and social awareness. "It was while I was marching on the streets that I began to see the extent of poverty in the country," Melon recounts.

From street protests, Melon started her street projects, launching medical missions three times a week in Pasay. Sometime after, Melon realized the irony of her situation. "I was from Makati, but I was helping the poor people of Pasay. I realized I should do something for Makati, too."

Quietly, so quietly that nobody beyond her circle of friends ever heard about it, Melon launched a health and nutrition program in Barangay Singkamas, which, she found out after a visit to the City Hall, was Makati's poorest barangay. She later brought the projects to Bangkal, seeing first-hand the poverty of the people and their struggles for survival and dignity.

She is heartened, she says, by the reception that the residents of Makati's depressed areas have given her. Melon also notes that the attitudes of voters, even from urban poor communities, have changed in the years since Edsa I and in the months since Edsa II.

"Where before they would ask candidates 'what's in it for me?' now they ask you: 'tell me why I should vote for you.'"

* * *

AND what does she say to them?

"I tell them that I have been working for poor people like them for many years without asking for anything in return. All I wanted to do, and all I want to do, is to serve them and see how we can all work toward a better life for all."

"They will test you," observes Melon of the folks in Makati's unmanicured districts. "They will drink from a glass before offering it to you, to see if you can stomach drinking from the same glass. And I do it, not because I want that person's vote, but only because I don't want to insult them."

If rumors are to be believed, Locsin has shown himself to be so finicky he cannot bring himself to "press the flesh" of unwashed constituents-to-be. While the political party of Tita Midz, as she is known in show-biz circles, is said to be the "birthday party." This because her main form of campaigning is said to be hosting "birthday" parties in depressed areas, where she doesn't share the people's fare but has special food brought in for her alone.

How ironic, then, that the candidate for congressperson from Makati with the common touch should be the one dubbed the "candidate of the elite."

History in US Embassy grounds

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

EACH year when the anniversary of the Battle for Manila in 1945 comes along (it used to be known as the "Liberation of Manila"), I get requests to write about the Death March, comfort women, the Santo Tomas Internment Camp, Corregidor or the famous Leyte Landing. My standard reply is an apology and I avoid further research by saying the topic is "not my period." Persistent requests are referred to Dr. Rico Jose of the University of the Philippines who is the authority on wartime Philippines. With this background I felt a bit out of place in the US Embassy last week to listen to a wartime remembrance by journalist Ralph Graves.

The afternoon was well spent because I was curious to see the chancery ballroom done in Filipino style and photographed beautifully. This huge, round room whose French doors open to the famous Manila Bay sunset, resembled part of the White House in Washington we always see in movies or TV news. All around the interior courtyard leading to this room are historical photographs that would interest even non-historians. I particularly liked an interior photograph of Malacañang at the turn of the last century that illustrates how recent renovations have made the present Malacañang so different from the original riverside vacation houses of the Spanish governors general. There was a model of the US transport "Thomas" on which the first American schoolteachers arrived in 1901. No wonder they are called "Thomasites." A photograph of these teachers helped me attach faces to the tombstones in the Thomasite plot in the Cementerio del Norte.

So much history comes with the building even if it was not technically "my period." Then I discovered the old Fergusson monument in the embassy garden. I had seen photographs of then Plaza Fergusson beside the Bayview Hotel marked with a monument of marble and bronze. Today, Plaza Fergusson is the Plaza Nuestra Señora de Guia highlighted by a bronze image of the Virgin of Ermita. Nobody knew where the old Fergusson monument went. When I pointed it out to National Museum director Gabriel Casal, he gave me a blank stare. I read somewhere that the monument in the embassy garden was erected in memory of George Hubbell who was honorary US consul to Manila in the 1820s.

While everyone headed to the cocktail table, I went around this forgotten monument I had seen only in old photographs. The marble base is eroded but the skill of the Spanish sculptor Mariano Benlliure was still evident. The double-life size bronze bust atop the marble base was a masterpiece by this friend and contemporary of our very own Juan Luna. The other known Benlliure in the Philippines is a bust of Luna now in the UST Museum. Arthur W. Fergusson (1859-1908) was a Spanish-speaking American interpreter who served as the official interpreter in the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Paris in 1898. This treaty not only closed the Spanish-American War but saw the sale of the Philippines lock, stock and barrel to the United States for $20 million. In 1900 Fergusson came to Manila as secretary of the Philippine Commission and in 1901 was appointed executive secretary of the Philippine government. In this capacity he went around the archipelago with US government officials on survey trips. He was the interpreter for all high profile affairs and even traveled to the St. Louis Exposition in 1904 as interpreter. Fergusson had a master of laws from Georgetown (where our very own President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo studied and had a classmate named Bill Clinton). He must have been an efficient colonial bureaucrat. Fergusson died in his Malate home in 1908 and was made immortal in this work by Benlliure in 1912.

Now to get back to the talk of Ralph Graves who was on a sentimental visit to the Philippines and the present US chancery building where he had once lived as a young man. As we all know, the Philippines passed through a transition period from US colony to complete independence. Manuel Luis Quezon as president of the Philippine Commonwealth moved into Malacañang once occupied by Spanish and American governors general, thus the present US Embassy was built as residence and chancery of the US high commissioner in the Philippines. Ralph Graves arrived in Manila in 1939, the stepson of Francis Sayre; they were the first residents of the chancery building.

Graves had many interesting stories about the chancery ballroom. How the staff plugged the French doors with towels each time it rained to prevent flooding. How he wished for privacy in a place with overzealous staff and how he found privacy with his girlfriend in the chancery elevator. How his brother would throw darts that stuck on the ceiling of the ballroom that later on served as the courtroom in the postwar Yamashita trial. The "Tiger of Malaya" was housed in Graves' former bedroom.

Aside from finding the Fergusson monument, I enjoyed the afternoon because the anecdotes of Ralph Graves gave a human face to the building. The talk and the stroll around the building and gardens made me realize that the US Embassy grounds are quite historical. The embassy is not just a place of broken hopes and denied US visas.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

May 14: Brace for the worst

OUTLOOK

Rigoberto Tiglao

WE'RE not referring to a scenario in which disgraced President Estrada's candidates win even half of the 13 senate seats. The numbers and the polls, as we have argued in detail in Friday's piece, show that even in a worst-case scenario, the majority of the new Senate will be supportive of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

But coming at the heels of January's remarkable demonstration of democratic action could be a display of how we Filipinos could make a mockery of democracy's key process—elections.

The circumstances leading to the May 14 polls, especially for the Senate, and recent developments indicate that the coming elections are so much vulnerable to massive fraud. Consider the following points:

It takes 10 to 12 months for the Commission on Elections to prepare its organization for national elections, a Comelec veteran told us. The recent controversies—the case of stolen ballots, the allegations that the printing plates for the Comelec documents were "borrowed" by a Comelec commissioner, the delayed accreditation of the citizens' watchdog group Namfrel as a quick-count organization—indicate that the Comelec seems to have started its work in organizing for the May 14 elections only in February.

Why is this so? There have been many reasons. Delays in the release of the Comelec's budget in the dying, desperate months of the Estrada administration: the P200-million budget for the May elections was released by the former president's budget secretary only in early January. The national distraction caused by the impeachment trial and the events leading to Edsa II. The registration for new voters in December—and even the unsuccessful move to hold another one last month. The Comelec's preoccupation for its new projects such as precinct-mapping and modernization of the electoral process.

A deliberate strategy

We can't help suspecting though that it was a deliberate strategy for the previous administration to have the Comelec unprepared for the May 14 elections—to ensure a landslide sweep by Estrada's ticket. With his administration's downhill slide early last year, it was obvious for Estrada—or his key strategists who knew all of their boss' secret dealings with his cronies—that only total control of the Senate would allow him to finish his term.

A major reason though for an unprepared Comelec is the factionalism among its commissioners. Never in recent elections has there been such a Comelec, whose commissioners are squabbling among themselves, even openly. How bad can it get? Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco on TV the other night claimed that Commissioner Resurrecion Borra was coddling the Comelec staff accused of stealing the official ballots. Chair Alfredo Benipayo is questioning the action of Tancangco, the head of the Comelec's printing committee, in awarding the printing contract to a particular printer.

One reason for the factionalism is that because of quite unique circumstances, the Comelec has found itself in an uncomfortable composition. The terms of the respected Chair Harriet Demetriou and two other commissioners expired Feb. 2. Ms Macapagal appointed Benipayo as chair and two new commissioners—Borra and Florentino Tuason.

Problem is, the four remaining Estrada-appointed commissioners, especially Tancangco—a protégé of the former president's brother-in-law Raul de Guzman—don't see eye-to-eye with the new Comelec members. Benipayo and the two new commissioners are believed to suspect that Tancangco will be working for the interests of Estrada candidates. Tancangco, on the other hand, is believed to look at Benipayo not only as a Macapagal agent. Tancangco is said to see Benipayo as a greenhorn with no idea of the nuances of the election process.

Now, how can you run a massive national operation that could involve 34 million people—the number of registered voters—if the group in charge of it is factionalized? How can you enforce election laws if the commissioners are squabbling with each other?

Ideal for cheating candidates

It's an ideal situation though for candidates who hope to win through fraud. That it can be done in this day and age—through such crude forms as adding zeros to a candidate's returns—has been shown in black and white by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel's quixotic attempts to prove in the courts that he was cheated.

That there are moves to undertake massive fraud is the only conclusion one can have with the recent reports of Comelec documents being stolen. That there were at least 1 million ballots stolen is really mind-boggling if you're familiar with that election-buying scheme known as *lansadera*, which like a chain letter, has a multiplier effect. Here's how it works:

The cheating candidate's agent has one stolen, genuine ballot, which he fills up himself. He tells a voter: This is the ballot you'll drop in the box, and I'll give you P200. How can the agent be sure that the voter really does that? He tells the voter: "As proof that you dropped my ballot, you give me the unfilled ballot you got from the precinct, and that's only when I pay you the P200." The voter does that, which gives the agent another benefit. He fills up the new empty ballot given to him, which he'll then use with another voter for another cycle. Theoretically therefore, a single stolen ballot is enough for an agent to buy all of the votes in a single precinct. In practice though, the agent won't be able to cover many of the voters, who often come at the same time. However, with more stolen ballots as the "triggers," and with more agents, a cheating candidate can involve as many people willing to sell their ballots as his funds allow.

The only way for determining if a *lansadera* was undertaken is for the losing candidate to file a complaint, and to get the ballots checked if they have the same handwriting. That would take years and millions of pesos to do.

Because of space limitations for this piece, we can't go into the details how we Filipinos seem to have perfected the black art of election cheating. If you're interested, check out in the Web, journalist Stella Tirol's "The Art of Cheating" at www.tag.org.ph/investigativereports or veteran politician Emigdio Tanjuatco's excellent piece at www.aceproject.org.

The big question: Who among the candidates are likely to cheat? To get an idea for the local level, check out Mon Tulfo's column the other day, where he published congressional candidate Ted Failon's letter to him. For the senatorial race, we do think it is quite obvious.

Who were the senatorial candidates in 1992, whom Pimentel accused of cheating him out of office, and submitted documents to the court to prove his allegations? Who would have a brother accused of having orchestrated the so-called *dagdag-bawas* scheme in 1992? Which candidate is fighting literally for his life, that if he doesn't become a senator of the republic, charges against him for multiple murder—penalty for which is death—are likely to prosper? Which candidates appear just to be at the edge of the winning circle, that fraud will give them the push even as their winning could appear credible?

Which camp in the Senate race has proven to be so much wanting in the morality and ethics department?

* * *

Comments: rtiglao@inq7.net

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No solid labor vote yet

THIS is in reply to a letter signed by Victor Briz of the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP) last March 19, 2001 that took issue with the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) and Crispin Beltran's stand on the elections.

Briz and the BMP are entitled, of course, to their own opinion. But not to their own facts. Let us clarify matters.

The letter posits: Beltran of the KMU "seems to have finally seen the light of day" for participating in the elections, having dismissed it in the past and "incessantly vented his ire" on Renato Magtubo of the Sanlakas party list. It also noted that Beltran "must be dreaming" in demanding pro-labor reforms from aspiring senators. Ka Bel and the KMU, the letter writer adds further, "may have overlooked" the so-called elementary truth about a "solid labor vote" as "they rely more on horse trading than direct action" as expressed when the People's Agenda was presented to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The letter then proceeds to its main point that "the labor vote must be organized."

We don't know why Briz and the BMP would attack Beltran just to prove their "elementary truth." Beltran "seems to have," "must be," "may have." The letter writer isn't even sure about his own opinion. What more about his facts?

Beltran and "his colleagues" (presumably the KMU and the party-list Bayan Muna for which Beltran is campaigning now as a nominee), had not dismissed elections in the past. Beltran even ran under the Partido ng Bayan and the Alliance for New Politics way back in 1987. He regularly participates in elections as a voter.

The issue is not whether to participate or not. The issue is how to participate to the best advantage of the people's issues and struggles. We don't shun parliamentary work. The KMU even got the support of Magtubo for the P125 across-the-board wage increase in Congress just as we welcomed other legislators' support for labor's demands. We don't "dream" about reforms. We just do it—not by the "horse trading" of unprincipled opportunists, but by direct militant mass actions till the august halls of Congress reverberate and burst like the Estrada impeachment trial in the Senate.

We have no qualms about a "solid labor vote" nor do we despair over "aspiring candidates fighting over our fragmented ballot." Candidates of the ruling classes are not fighting over the labor vote. They are fighting for the spoils of office getting smaller and fewer as the socioeconomic crisis gets deeper and graver. Only a populist demagogue would believe otherwise.

A "solid" labor vote is simply impossible because of the objective conditions of the pre-industrial, semi-feudal economy that we have. A solid program for national unity, freedom, justice and meaningful change is where labor can and must unite. The Estrada Resign Movement and People Power II demonstrated this fact—and this despite the BMP and Sanlakas' calls for "resign all" covering up for Estrada.—**MANUEL SARMIENTO, national executive committee, Kilusang Mayo Uno; convenor, Bayan Muna-Workers Sector, Project 3, Quezon City**

LETTERS INQUIRER

No bias for Muslims at DPWH

THIS has reference to the column of Ramon Tulfo last Feb. 24, 2001 titled, "Muslim applicants at DPWH."

Please be informed that, indeed, since Secretary Simeon A. Datumanong assumed the position of public works secretary, his office has been teeming with visitors and well-wishers. It is because as part of our customs and tradition, whenever a person, whether Muslim or Christian, has made a significant feat, friends and acquaintances extend their personal wishes by putting up streamers or sending congratulatory messages.

As a leader in Mindanao, Datumanong has numerous friends and acquaintances and some of them come to his office to extend their greetings and best wishes. However, these people, educated or otherwise, know how to observe proper decorum. Maybe the allegation of Tulfo about alleged impropriety on the part of the visitors and callers was an attempt by his source (whom he described as "a mischievous DPWH official") to mislead.

We would like to inform readers that since Datumanong assumed office, he has not employed anybody in the Department of Public Works and Highways. However, he borrowed two personnel (a private secretary and data encoder) from his former office at the House of Representatives and one from the Department of Justice, who served as his chief of staff.

He has not appointed any Muslim employee to any key position. He only confirmed the designation of the officer in charge of the ADB-PMO made by then Secretary Gregorio R. Vigilar.

May I make it clear that Datumanong's appointment as public works secretary is a clear manifestation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's desire to give emphasis to the infrastructure development of Mindanao and give a Mindanaoan the chance to participate in the development of our country. Be that as it may, it is never his intention to be biased toward Mindanao to the detriment of Luzon and the Visayas.—**MUSTAPHA A. SAMBOLAWAN, chief of staff, Office of the Secretary, Department of Public Works and Highways, Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila**

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We are one with Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, His Eminence Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, the Catholic Church, and all concerned Filipinos who have courageously taken the unpopular stand of banning the film "Live Show".

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People power for coconut farmers

IF there is one valid conclusion that we can make with regard to Edsa I and II, it is that the people want drastic change and they have the power to effect such change. If so, then insight tells us that we can and should put this power to uses other than booting out a dictator or a high-profile hoodlum. For example, we can harness this power to solve problems such as graft and corruption, rising criminality, electoral abuses and economic sabotage. The question is how?

Let's take economic sabotage. If Joseph Estrada was booted out of office for amassing millions through criminal acts, why can't we do something to the oligarch and his cohorts who virtually robbed the coconut farmers of billions of pesos under the auspices of martial law? Yet the government seems helpless to go after them. Why is it that the oligarchs are the ones enjoying the largesse of the coco levy fund, while the coconut farmers are still mired in penury?

Recently, there were talks that the coconut industry was dying. Well, this wouldn't come as a surprise. Most likely the oligarchs are at it again. Facing impending defeat in the coco levy fund case before the Supreme Court, they are trying to spread disinformation to make it appear that coconut farmers are no longer interested in pursuing the case.

I appeal to all coconut farmers not to be disheartened. We should keep on fighting until victory is won. Furthermore, I urge all coconut farmers' associations (except the Cocofed which is nothing but a tool of the oligarchs) to do an Edsa, if the situation demands. If we can gather 10 percent of 16 million coconut farmers and their dependents and go to Edsa (or Padre Faura), that would be sufficient to send moral shock waves to the inner sanctum of the Supreme Court so that it will decide in our favor. All that is needed is for a leader to make a call through the media for mass action. I am ready to spend my last centavo to participate in what I may term "coco people power."

People power is a tremendous force that can pulverize the evil strongholds of exploiters, economic saboteurs, cronies and oligarchs. If the law cannot touch them, people power can certainly give them a big kick in the ass.—**BASILIO CALAPRE, Maasin, Southern Leyte**

Tutuban Center not run by city gov't

THIS is to clarify issues raised by the report written by Juliet Labog-Javellana titled, "Harassment in Manila? PPC Senate bets barred entry at Plaza Miranda, Tutuban Mall."

Tutuban Center was never run and is not being run by the city government. Rather, it is operated by the Tutuban Properties Inc. (TPI), a private corporation.

Secondly, the TPI management was not given advance notice about this campaign activity. No one from the group coordinated with the TPI management. Despite the unannounced campaign activity staged at 10 a.m. of March 10, 2001 at the Tutuban Center, the TPI management did its best to help the group of former Speaker Manny Villar. We gave the group strategic and accessible parking at the mall's internal road way. The group was also assisted by the TPI's security group as they went around the mall handing out leaflets to our customers. We extended all possible assistance that we could to the People Power Coalition candidates and will welcome any group that wishes to campaign in our mall.

What was not allowed; however, was the use of megaphones and placards inside the mall building as this may distract or bother sales personnel and customers inside the stores and create panic or chaos.—**BIENVENIDO G. MARIANO, general manager, Tutuban Properties Inc., Claro M. Recto Avenue, Manila**

Not popular but competent

IT is unfortunate that the gauge of your columnist, Bambi Harper, for effective public servants is popularity instead of qualification or competence and track record. (PDI, 3/20/01)

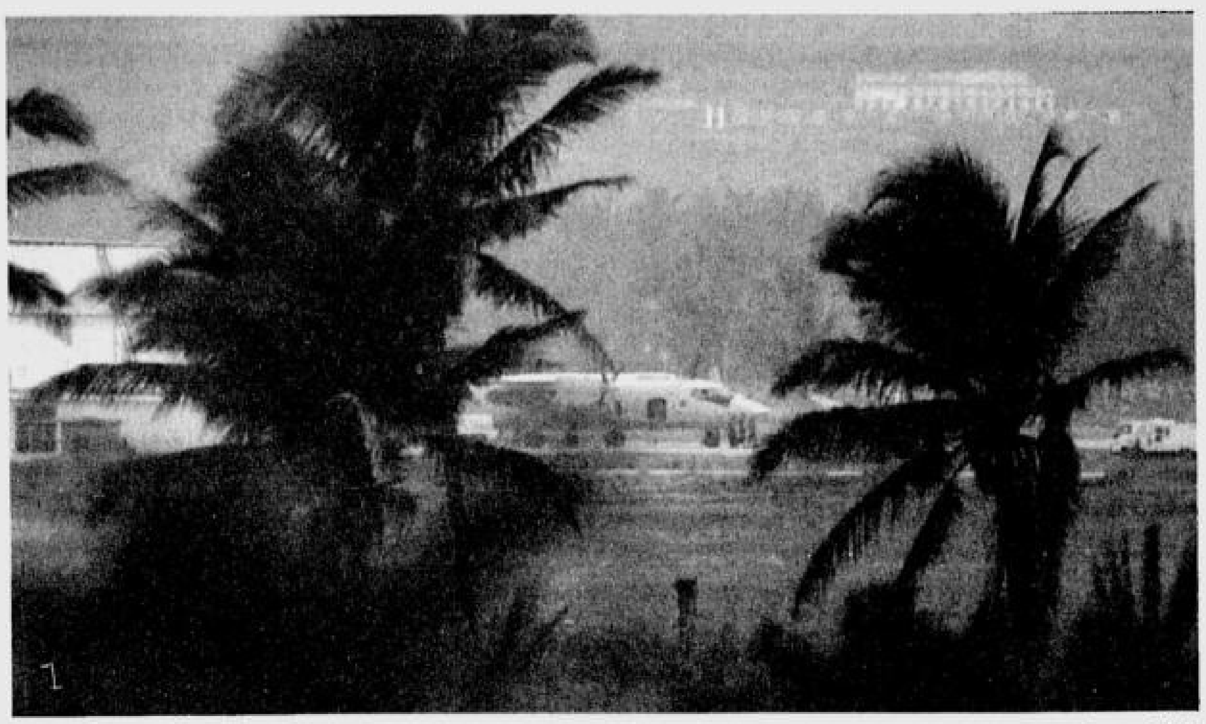
I assure you that while I may not be as popular as other appointees in this administration, I have the professional attainment and experience which could help me contribute to the overall goal of this administration for effective public service.

I would be ready anytime to acquaint Ms Harper with my capabilities and plans to elevate our airports to world-class standards.

Allow me also to inform you that my nomination and eventual appointment to my position went straight to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and not through first gentleman Mike Arroyo.—**EDGARDO C. MANDA, general manager, Manila International Airport Authority**

The WORLD

Margot J. Baterina, Editor



A PLANE parks at Sanya airport on Hainan island where a US spy plane made an emergency landing after a midair collision with a Chinese fighter plane April 3. The 24-man crew of the US plane began their third day of captivity on Hainan island on Tuesday as a diplomatic standoff between Beijing and Washington deepened. REUTERS

Bush demands prompt return of crew, plane

WASHINGTON—In a tense standoff with China, President George W. Bush demanded the prompt return of 24 crew members of a Navy spy plane and the release of their crippled plane "without further damaging or tampering." China said there would be no access at least until Tuesday.

Bush, reading a sober statement at the White House on Monday, said, "Failure of the Chinese government to react promptly to our request is inconsistent with standard diplomatic practice and with the expressed desire of both our countries for better relations."

The emergency landing of the turboprop EP-3 surveillance plane on the Chinese island of Hainan after its collision with a Chinese fighter jet early Sunday brought a new chill to already frosty US-Chinese relations just as Bush was nearing a decision on an arms-sale package for Taiwan that Beijing has opposed.

The crew, in one of its last communications from the plane, told US authorities the aircraft was being boarded by the Chinese, a senior US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. But Mary Ellen Countryman, a White House spokesperson, said: "We have no confirmation that they boarded the plane."

Adm. Dennis Blair, commander in chief of US Pacific Command, told CNN late Monday that only one message was received from the crew after it landed. "The crew told us that they had in fact landed safely. That's the last communication that we've had with them."

"We've had encouraging words from Chinese officials in China and we look forward to having our officials get in touch with them," he said. "I'd rather not put a time frame on it—the sooner the better."

US officials had no information on the extent to which the plane, laden with high-tech surveillance equipment, might have been searched. The United States considers the aircraft sovereign US territory and not subject to search or seizure.

China blamed the collision on the American pilot, saying the US plane veered into one of its F-8 fighters.

Navy spy planes fly routinely off China's southeastern coast to monitor military activity, especially any that might threaten Taiwan, and they are often shadowed in turn by Chinese fighter planes.

As tensions grew on Monday, the United States ordered three Navy destroyers to remain near Hainan island instead of continuing their journey home from the Gulf. Later, US Defense Department officials said the three ships no longer were needed and continuing with their original plan to return home via Guam.

The United States sent three diplomats to the island in hopes of meeting with the crew.

"Our priorities are the prompt and safe return of the crew and the return of the aircraft without further damaging or tampering," Bush said on the White House lawn.

Later, during a picture-taking session in the Oval Office with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Bush sidestepped questions on whether the crew members were viewed as hostages or whether he believed the accident to be a provocation by China.

"My reaction is that the Chinese must promptly allow us to have contact with the 24 airmen and women that are there and return our plane to us without any further tampering," said Bush, facing the most difficult foreign situation of his young presidency.

At the State Department, spokesperson Richard Boucher said, "We see this as an accident, as a midair accident. That's what we know." *AP*

More stress for US-China ties

WASHINGTON—The collision of an American spy plane with a Chinese fighter jet adds a new dimension to the tension between the United States and China over the future of the island of Taiwan.

The incident, even if resolved quickly, could influence debate within the Bush administration on the kinds of advanced weaponry to sell to Taiwan.

The president is expected to decide this month whether to grant Taiwan's request to buy new destroyers equipped with Aegis radar, a deal China strongly opposes.

That decision will depend on "how the Chinese are acting," Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Monday. Shelton said he had not yet made a recommendation to President George W. Bush.

The incident Sunday in which a Chinese fighter jet collided with a US Navy EP-3E Aries II electronic surveillance plane over the South China Sea comes at a particularly sensitive point for US-China relations.

In addition to the issue of arms sales to Taiwan, there also is tension over China's detention of visiting American scholars, the recent defection of a high-ranking Chinese Army officer and US plans to build a national missile defense. The Bush administration also is reviewing US-China military relations.

Bush is trying to walk a fine line by keeping the pressure on China for US access to the crew without using rhetoric or taking actions that would escalate the situation "into something it's not, and that is a crisis," said a senior US official who discussed the matter on condition of anonymity.

After lengthy discussions with his foreign policy team, Bush decided to refrain from calling President Jiang Zemin, taking pains not to suggest the White House was in crisis mode. *AP*

2 killed as Israel steps up reprisals

RAFAH, Gaza Strip—In another sign that Israel is stepping up its reprisals, helicopter gunships homed in on a pickup truck and fired rockets that killed a leading member of a radical Islamic group who was suspected of planting roadside bombs.

And in the biblical town of Bethlehem, Palestinian gunmen and Israeli soldiers exchanged intense gunfire. An Israeli soldier was killed and at least eight Palestinians were wounded. Clouds of white smoke rose from Bethlehem, from tank shells and grenade launchers, and the thunderous booms could be heard in central Jerusalem, a few kilometers away.

In office for less than a month, Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon finds himself in a worsening battle with Palestinian militants. Sharon has promised to restore calm, but so far he has employed military tactics similar to those used by his predecessor Ehud Barak, who was voted out of office after failing to quell the Palestinian uprising.

Palestinians, meanwhile, blamed Israel for the increase in fighting in recent days. "All these Israeli attacks will destroy the peace process and increase the cycle of violence in the region," said Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo.

Peace talks have broken down, and there are no prospects for their revival at present. US Secretary of State Colin Powell called Sharon on Monday, US President George W. Bush said in Washington.

An official in Sharon's office, requesting anonymity, said Sharon told Powell that Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority is responsible for escalating violence, and Israel must take steps to protect its citizens.

Later, Powell called Arafat, who asked him for help in ending what he called Israeli aggression, said Arafat's spokesperson, Nabil Aburdeneh.

In the Gaza Strip, the Israeli helicopter attack charred the body 29-year-old Mohammed Abdel Al, a leading member of Islamic Jihad's military wing, and turned his truck into a pile of twisted, smoldering metal.

Four Israeli helicopter gunships hovered above Abdel Al's truck near the Rafah refugee camp on the border with Egypt, and two of the gunships unleashed rockets, said a cousin, Sami Abdel Al.

In a quick burial a few hours later, thousands of mourners shouted "revenge, revenge" as they marched behind the body draped in red blanket. Dozens of gunmen fired in the air. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Macedonia forces, rebels exchange fire

SKOPJE, Macedonia—Ethnic Albanian rebels and Macedonian forces skirmished Monday on the tense border with Kosovo in an area the Army had earlier claimed was free of insurgents. Macedonia said one of the rebels was wounded in the exchange of small-arms fire. Meanwhile, efforts to quell tensions in the former Yugoslav republic struck a sour note as demonstrators jeered a European security envoy and an ethnic Albanian party boycotted government-initiated talks on reforms. Also Monday, the Nato-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo said it seized a substantial arms cache near the village of Krivenik, just across the frontier. The peacekeepers found an abandoned guerrilla encampment with 32 rocket-propelled grenades and 80 boxes of small-arms ammunition, said spokesperson Capt. Alayne Cramer. It was the latest such discovery of rebel weaponry in recent days by the peacekeepers, who have pledged to help stop guerrilla infiltration of Macedonia from Kosovo. *AP*

Hubble spots most distant supernova

DENVER—The Hubble Space Telescope, peering 10 billion years back in time to when the universe was in its adolescence, has spotted the most distant exploding star ever observed. Researchers said the discovery bolsters the controversial theory that mysterious "dark energy" is accelerating the expansion of the cosmos. Invisible and poorly understood, dark energy might account for as much as two-thirds of space. Proposed a century ago by Einstein, it may counteract more familiar forces such as gravity. The supernova, barely discernible with the most powerful instruments, provides clues to dark energy. While dim, the dying star gleams brighter and moves differently than it would if the universe had expanded at a steady rate since the beginning of time. *AP*

US 1990s growth fastest in history

WASHINGTON—The United States experienced the biggest population increase in its history during the 1990s, the Census Bureau reported, with explosive growth in cities of the South and West helping counter declines in the Plains and across the Rust Belt. New York and Los Angeles still have the two biggest cores of population. Good climate and jobs helped Las Vegas; McAllen, Texas; and Boise, Idaho to be among the top metropolitan areas in growth rates. Las Vegas again was the No. 1 metro area in growth, according to the report Monday by the Census Bureau. Growth in cities brought new challenges to city officials dealing with more sprawl and an influx of immigrants arriving to take low-wage jobs. The report also renewed attention on isolated counties in America's heartland trying to reverse declining populations and economies. Over 281 million people called America home in 2000, according to the Census Bureau, an increase of 13 percent, or nearly 33 million, from 1990. The 33 million surpassed the previous 10-year growth record of 28 million between 1950 and 1960, a gain fueled primarily by the post-World War II baby boom. *AP*

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   Palmas del Mar - Bacolod City
   Pearl Farm Beach Resort - Davao
   Ridgeview Chalets - Cagayan de Oro
5. Prize Packages are inclusive of a FREE overnight stay and complimentary breakfast for four (4).
6. Clients have the option to choose only one (1) vacation package from the list in #4. Reservation schedules are subject to confirmation by the official promo coordinator.
7. Upon availment of the loan, the prize package will be sent to the client together with the loan documents.
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9. This offer cannot be combined with other on-going promos of BPI and/or BPI Family Bank for Auto Loans.
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Followers considering use of violence to keep Wahid in power

JAKARTA—As pressure mounts for the impeachment of President Abdurrahman Wahid, some of his fanatical supporters within Indonesia's largest Muslim organization are openly considering the use of violence, even murder, to keep him in power.

News reports on Tuesday said leaders of Wahid's Nahdlatul Ulama organization would meet on Wednesday to debate whether Islamic law permits them to resort to bloodshed.

The Jakarta Post newspaper reported the group's chair Ali Maschan as saying that a campaign to oust Wahid could be regarded as a rebellion against the government. Islamic law allows the killing of those involved in such an uprising, known as "bughot," he said.

The latest threat of violence comes as many Indonesians fear that a war of words between Wahid and rival political leaders could lead to street battles among their followers.

On Monday, about 500 Wahid loyalists joined a volunteer force that vowed to fight to the death in his defense in Surabaya, East Java's provincial capital.

Wahid's supporters revere him as a spiritual Islamic leader and have repeatedly demonstrated against moves to topple him.

The current political crisis has stirred passions across Indonesia, the world's most populous Islamic nation. *AP*

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Milosevic admits he financed Serb rebels

MILOSEVIC

BELGRADE—Jailed former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic on Monday admitted for the first time that Belgrade secretly financed the armies of Bosnian and Croatian Serbs in their bloody wars in the early 1990s.

The unprecedented confession was part of an appeal he drafted himself against his detention on charges of stealing public funds.

He said he had not used the money for personal profit but to secretly help Serb separatists in republics seeking independence from the former Yugoslavia.

The claim is likely to be a hot political potato for the reformist authorities in Belgrade who want to see him permanently behind bars.

"Regarding funds spent on weapons, ammunition and the other needs of the Army of Republika Srpska (RS, Bosnian Serb entity) and the Army of the RSK (the wartime Serb entity in Croatia), these sums could not be publicly presented in the draft budget for reasons of state security, as the top state secret," Milosevic's defense appeal said.

Belgrade denial

During Milosevic's decade-long rule and the wars in Bosnia and Croatia, Belgrade firmly denied any financial and military assistance to the Serb wartime entities in the two former Yugoslav republics.

Milosevic, at the time president of Serbia, reiterated during the conflicts that his country "was not in the war," although the West repeatedly accused him of backing Serb nationalist forces.

Milosevic was arrested Sunday, accused of ordering his minions to embezzle huge amounts of public money for personal profit and to help maintain his autocratic regime in power.

But Milosevic hit back with an argument that the money was to help Serbs in breakaway Balkans republics.

"Due to reasons of state secrecy, all the funds that went to the Army of the RS were not publicly presented," said the appeal drawn up by Milosevic, a lawyer by training.

Vojin Dimitrijevic, a prominent international law expert, said such remarks would help the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague, which has indicted Milosevic for war crimes in Kosovo and is considering extending the charges to cover the Bosnian conflict.

He said the statement "reinforces allegations over his links" with the two Serb wartime entities in Bosnia and Croatia.

"This also relates to his command responsibility, because if he had known what was happening, he could have prevented it.

"But he did not; instead, he was paying for it," Dimitrijevic said.

He added Milosevic's remarks could also raise fresh arguments for Bosnian and Croatian charges against Yugoslavia itself for aggression.

International Court

The two states have persisted with the charges before the International Court, another institution based in The Hague, despite establishing relations with Belgrade after Milosevic's fall last October.

However, Dimitrijevic warned that such claims could be used "not with the intention to commit genocide, but to defend the Serbs (living) in these areas."

The new Belgrade administration, which has tried to distance itself from Milosevic's wartime policies, has yet to react to the claims.

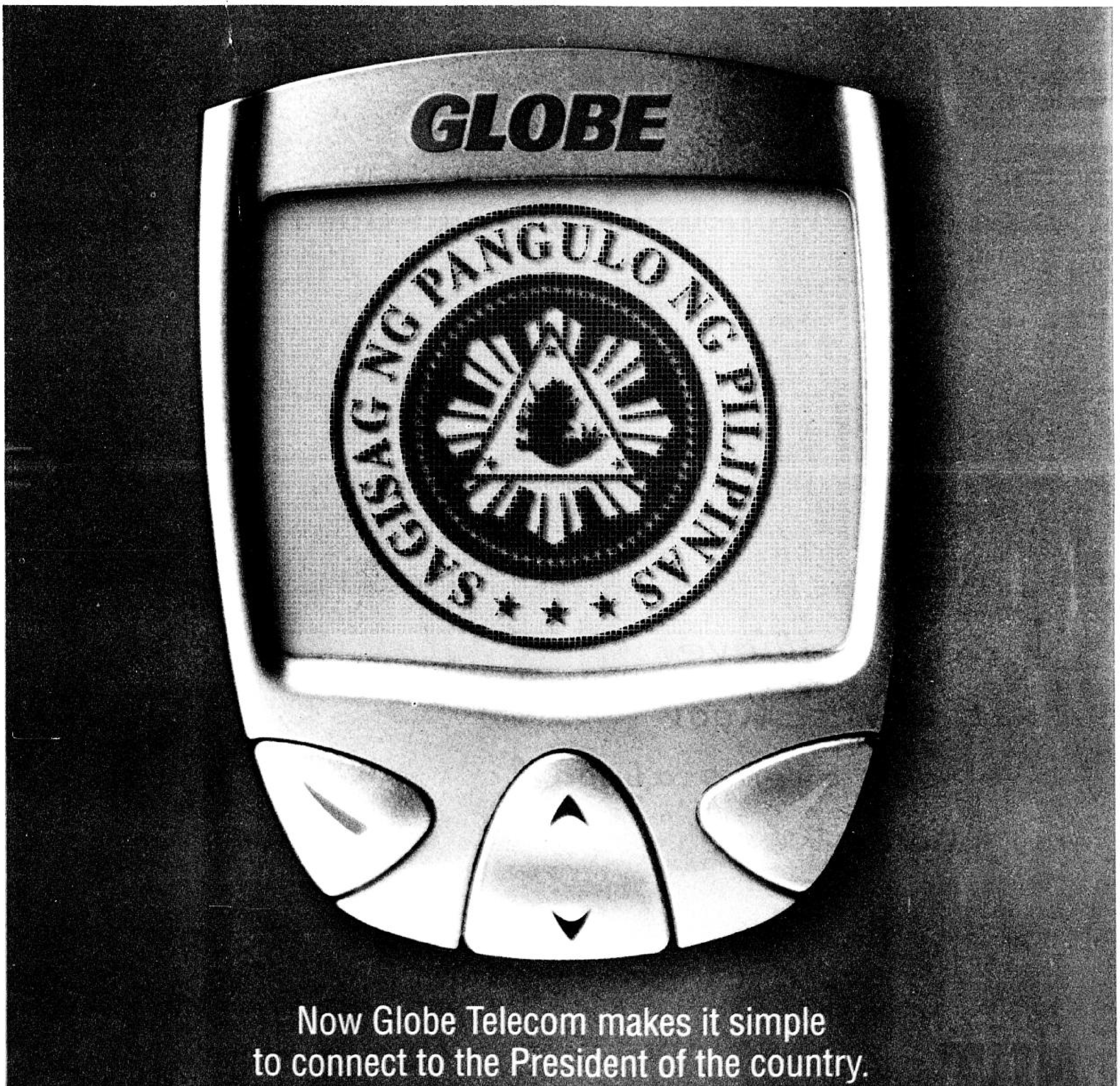
"This sounds like a hot political potato for them, since it would be very difficult to confront claims that Milosevic and his clique did nothing wrong, but assisted their kin in Bosnia and Croatia," said one analyst who requested anonymity.

Many Serbs still consider their brethren in Bosnia and Croatia to have been victims of the secessionist aims of wartime Zagreb and Sarajevo leaderships.

"This might be a line of his future defense," the analyst said, adding: "It would tough even for the best prosecutor to risk blaming Milosevic for helping the Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia."

Milosevic rejected all charges against him, insisting he was a victim of "a politically motivated process."

"The judicial process against me is politically motivated, on the orders of the new authorities aimed at devaluing all I did during these long years, notably the fact that I was an opponent of world powers, in the interests of the state and the people," he said in his appeal. *AFP*



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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Eastern Visayas and Eastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: **PAGASA**

Metro Manila HI 34° Lo 24°	**Baguio** HI 25° Lo 17°	**Tuguegarao** HI 32° Lo 23°
Laoag HI 32° Lo 24°	**Clark Zone** HI 33° Lo 23°	**Tagaytay** HI 32° Lo 22°
Legazpi HI 31° Lo 26°	**Bacolod** HI 33° Lo 24°	**Roxas** HI 36° Lo 26°
Cebu HI 33° Lo 23°	**Tacloban** HI 32° Lo 26°	**Gen. Santos** HI 34° Lo 23°
Zamboanga HI 32° Lo 24°	**Cagayan de Oro** HI 33° Lo 23°	**Davao** HI 32° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research

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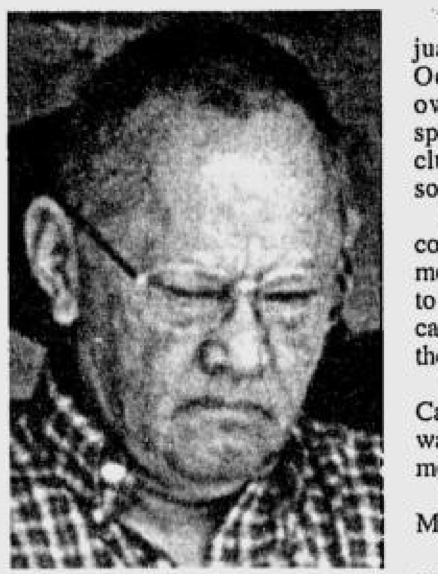
Danding won't pay ₱8M in taxes to La Carlota

By Carla Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Business tycoon Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. owes the La Carlota City government some P8.2 million in real property taxes covering several landholdings in eight barangays.

A report from the Land Tax Division of the La Carlota City Treasurer's Office showed that as of March 31, Cojuangco had unpaid real property taxes of P8,226,539.42 for plantations in Barangay Consuelo, Batuan, Balabag, Ayungon, Ara-al, Haguimit, San Miguel and Cubay.

The document was furnished local journalists by the camp of Juancho Aguirre, who is running for representative in the fourth congressional district against incumbent Rep. Carlos Cojuangco, Eduardo Cojuangco's son.


COJUANGCO

Ponchit Ponce-Enrile, general manager of ECJ and Sons Agricultural Corp., said in a statement that the corporation paid its real property taxes (RPTs) to all other local government units where it has landholdings.

The corporation handles Cojuangco's landholdings in Negros Occidental. The businessman owns at least 4,000 hectares spread in the fourth district, including La Carlota, 45 kilometers southeast of here.

Ponce-Enrile, however, said the company purposely withheld payment of real property taxes (RPTs) to the La Carlota government "because the company does not trust the incumbent government."

"The funds for the RPTs for La Carlota are placed in a bank deposit, waiting for an honest local government," Ponce-Enrile said.

The mayor of La Carlota is Marcelo Aguirre, brother of Juancho.

"Looking at what La Carlota is now, our fears that the taxes we pay will only go to waste is justified," Ponce-Enrile said.

"It is to the interest of the people that we withhold payment, and wait for a better and honest local government. This way, we can be sure that the taxes we pay will go to the welfare and benefit of the people," he added.

Ponce-Enrile said the corporation also sought the release of the names of other landowners who owe real estate taxes to the La Carlota government.

He said a majority of the landowners in the province have delinquent RPTs.

"We are being singled out for political reasons. But in the interest of fairness, the names of the other delinquent taxpayers must also be revealed," he said.

Juancho Aguirre maintained that the government in La Carlota was transparent and that it was the duty of every taxpayer to pay taxes.

"Claiming that the amount will go to waste is just an excuse," he said.

"We are not saying the others have no debts but they are hard-up, unlike the Cojuangcos who have the money to pay for it," Aguirre said.

PNP reopens kidnap-murder case

BAGUIO CITY—Police have reopened the kidnap-murder case of University of the Philippines College Baguio student Giancarlo Leung and UP graduate Tihani Tingal, on the prodding of Leung's parents.

Charles Leung, Gian's father, said the police had failed to convince him that the arrest of three Baguio youths had solved the March 8 abduction of his son and Tingal.

The bodies of Leung and Tingal were recovered in Pampanga three days after their abduction.

Members of the "Magic 5," a breakaway group of the Samahang Ilocano (SI) fraternity, were tagged by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) as key suspects in the murders, based on the theory that Leung's abduction and killing was the consequence of a fraternity feud.

Leung headed the UP Baguio chapter of the Beta Sigma fraternity.

Director General Leandro Mendoza, PNP chief, declared the case closed and earned a promotion last month.

But the elder Leung said the police had not been transparent about their findings, prompting the family to seek a more comprehensive investigation.

He said the reorganization affecting the PNP, including the gradual phaseout of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, was due to their complaint.

President Macapagal-Arroyo recently directed the military, the police and the National Bureau of Investigation to cooperate under a new task force targeting organized kidnap-for-ransom syndicates.

Leung said a tripartite task force is reviewing the CIDG report on his son's case.

Chief witness Job Johann Calano, 22, told the Inquirer in an earlier interview that they were recruited by Testado to avenge "a wrong" committed on a SI sorority member.

The sorority member was reportedly beaten up and tortured by the Beta Sigma fraternity in January, Calano said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

SC trial OKd

BAGUIO CITY—The Supreme Court has approved the trial of an oral defamation case filed against a Chinese who claims he enjoys diplomatic immunity. In a decision released here Saturday, the high court denied a motion for reconsideration filed by Jeffrey Liang, a senior economist of Asian Development Bank, to junk the suit filed against him by an ADB employee for allegedly uttering derogatory remarks. The high court said Liang's alleged crime was not made in the performance of his official functions. *Delmar Cariño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Prisoner recaptured

BAGUIO CITY—A prisoner escaped from the city jail during a prayer rally Tuesday but was captured hours later in his house here, police said. Emilio Romero, 32, detained on a drug possession charge, was captured at his home where he returned to see his wife, police said. Romero eluded jail guards while attending a Born Again Christian ministry at the jail's chapel. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Boundary dispute

ORMOC CITY—Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo has recommended to the Supreme Court the dismissal of a case filed by the city government involving a boundary dispute with Kananga town over geothermal energy-rich Barangay Tongonan. Marcelo said the court had no jurisdiction over the case, citing the Local Government Code which states that boundary disputes shall be jointly settled by the contending local governments' legislative councils. Ormoc and Kananga had long been feuding over Tongonan as the mining of its geothermal fields means big royalty tax revenues.

Felix Codilla, PDI Visayas Bureau

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Exec belies vice gov's drug report

LEGAZPI CITY—A top Masbate provincial official has belied a report of Vice Gov. Mario Espinosa that money from drug trafficking in the province might be used by some politicians for the May 14 elections.

Provincial administrator Rodolfo Apalla said in a phone interview that Espinosa's allegation of a worsening illegal drug situation in Masbate was "baseless and ridiculous."

Apalla said the illegal drug trade and other activities in the province had waned since Gov. Antonio Kho formed a task force to go after those involved.

He said the drug problem had been greatly minimized as the provincial government intensified its campaign against illegal drugs. The drive, he said, was one of Kho's 10 commitments to Masbateños.

Espinosa earlier told the INQUIRER that in Placer, Cawayan and other towns, one could buy shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) at P50 per sachet.

The vice governor cited reports of the presence of known Chinese drug dealer Lawrence Wang in Masbate. In one instance, he said, Wang had been seen fishing with a top government official.

Espinosa said Wang and the government official were both detainees in the Bicutan Drug Rehabilitation Center.

Apalla said he believed that Espinosa was referring to Kho who, he said, was detained in Camp Ricardo Papa in Taguig, Metro Manila, in the same compound with Wang for two years and five months.

Kho was the suspected mastermind in the killing of Rep. Tito Espinosa along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

"Their being together in the same detention center could not be avoided," Apalla said.

He claimed that Wang had never been seen in Masbate.

"Wang is a big-time drug dealer. He will not waste time in an unproductive place like Masbate. He would prefer to operate in mainland Bicol or Metro Manila," the provincial administrator said. *Roly Embile, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

MEMBERS of Bayan Muna and other groups picket in front of the Supreme Court compound in Baguio City.
TOOTS SOBERANO

Bayan Muna gains from SC rally

BAGUIO CITY—The 400-member militant caravan from Metro Manila that picketed the Supreme Court's compound here on Tuesday provided one of the largest left-wing party-list groups its best national campaign sortie yet.

Bayan Muna, a party-list coalition, benefited most from the publicity and the protest march that passed through heavy morning traffic here, said Manny Loste, Bayan Muna coordinator for Cordillera.

Bayan Muna joined the Council for Philippine Affairs (Copa), Akbayan and another party-list group, Sanlakas, in front of the Supreme Court compound to protest the delay in the prosecution of disgraced President Joseph Estrada.

The high court had sustained a directive prohibiting the Office of the Ombudsman from filing plunder charges against the disgraced President until it ruled on Estrada's claims to the presidency.

The tribunal ruled against two Estrada petitions in an en banc session on Tuesday, which sought a reconsideration on its ruling supporting the presidency of Macapagal-Arroyo and which sought guarantees regarding Estrada's immunity from suit.

Loste said campaigning had been the hardest challenge yet for militant groups who led the People Power II in Edsa and who now compose Bayan Muna.

"This is the first time for many of us (whose chief specialties are community organizing and lobbying). It is so different, yet we have come to respect it as a very challenging endeavor," he said.

He added: "(The *trapos*) have insights, which we adopted in our national campaigns and they have proven to be very effective. We are able to reach people . . . we are even prepared for the times when they ask us questions, sometimes they confront us with hard questions about our being (stereotyped) leftists which we have to swallow.

"Bayan Muna will always try for a higher campaign. We engage people. We engage people in debates, in discussions of issues. But we engage a smaller group of people each time, and it takes time. We learned how to understand this new role from the *trapos*. We learn every time." *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Bets' word war scuttles signing of election pact

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A word war between two candidates scuttled what could have been the first peace covenant signing to ensure clean and honest elections in Iloilo.

The Commission on Elections and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) decided to forego the signing of the covenant because former Rep. Oscar Garin and Jaime Torres spent the time lambasting each other in their speeches.

Garin of the Nationalist People's Coalition and Torres of the Lakas-NUCD are running for congressman in Iloilo's first district.

The rival candidates were at a gymnasium on March 31 in Oton town supposedly to sign a peace covenant for first district candidates that would bind them to work for peaceful, clean and honest elections.

But a heated exchange started when incumbent first district Rep. Ninfa Garin, Oscar's wife, grabbed the microphone from Torres and told him not to raise issues against her husband because the occasion was not a candidates' forum where platforms and issues were raised.

Ninfa, who accompanied her husband, was not a party to the covenant signing because she is not a candidate.

Torres' tirades were in answer to Oscar Garin's proposals to revise the covenant.

Garin claimed the draft document was too general and did not specify the conduct of candidates before, during and after elections. It only asked candidates to uphold the law and respect the Constitution.

Among others, Garin wanted that both of them should have a representative to man the checkpoints, in addition to the personnel assigned by the Comelec.

Garin also wanted to field a representative in the "immediate response team" of the Comelec because he wanted to "protect the personal interests" of both camps.

He raised the so-called malpractices in the 1998 elections in which his wife beat Torres by a slim margin. Torres filed a protest, claiming some of the election returns were tampered with. But the House Representatives Election Tribunal ruled in favor of the Garins.

Torres, who arrived late during the meeting, felt alluded to in Garin's speech and also took the floor to rebut the charges.

Sensing some tension, Tomas Valera, provincial election supervisor, called for a recess. He explained to Torres that Garin was not out to embarrass him, but Torres was not consoled.

Valera said Torres could make proposals similar to what Garin had raised.

Later, Garin and Torres shook hands but did not sign the peace covenant.

Fr. Meliton Oso of PPCRV said what happened taught them a lesson on how to conduct covenant signings in the future.

Poll body unseats 2 Pampanga mayors

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Barely a month-and-a-half before the May 14 elections, political changes have occurred in two Pampanga towns considered base areas of two rival armed communist groups.

The Commission on Elections has ordered Mayor Catalina Bagasina (Nationalist People's Coalition) of Sasmuan and Mayor Jason Sagum (Lakas-NUCD/NPC) of San Luis to vacate their posts.

The Comelec reversed on March 26 an earlier ruling by a regional trial court declaring Bagasina winner in the 1998 mayoral race in Sasmuan.

It ordered the reinstatement of Mayor Fernando Baltazar, who was unseated by the court on May 10 last year.

Judge Isagani Palad declared Bagasina winner in the 1998 mayoral race, saying that the latter had beaten Baltazar by 150 votes.

Mikey

Bagasina claimed on Saturday that her camp had discovered that an "influential person" close to the Macapagal administration was behind the issuance of the Comelec decision.

Although she did not name the person behind her ouster, her supporters claimed it was presidential son and Lakas vice gubernatorial candidate Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo who had worked for the unseating of Bagasina.

Arroyo denied this allegation. He said he was not influential enough to pressure the Comelec to issue an order for or against any politician.

Bagasina said she knew that Baltazar had filed a motion to contest the RTC decision before the Supreme Court and not before the Comelec.

She said her lawyers would file a motion for reconsideration this week.

In San Luis town, the Comelec ordered Sagum to vacate the mayoral seat after it ruled that Jovito Bondoc had won by 18 votes in the 1998 polls. It said Bondoc received 8,554 votes while Sagum garnered 8,536 votes.

The decision also overturned the earlier rulings of Judge Patrocinio Corpuz and the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal that Sagum was the winner.

Residents of Sasmuan and San Luis fear that the two decisions of the poll body would result in clashes between supporters of Bagasina and Baltazar in Sasmuan and of Sagum and Bondoc in San Luis.

Sasmuan is being used as a base of operation of the communist New People's Army and its breakaway faction, the Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan.

San Luis, on the other hand, is reportedly being frequented by NPA and RHB members as well as members of Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan.

Senior Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Pampanga police director, has already sent more policemen to the two towns to defuse the growing tension and prevent violent confrontations between supporters of rival politicians.

Abra

In Abra, the newly designated mayor of Danglas town found himself working in his house after ousted Mayor Jojo Borbon padlocked the mayor's office at the municipal hall there.

Newly designated Mayor Sotero Abbago, a former municipal court judge in Pidigan town, said he did not want to draw the ire of Borbon and his supporters.

The Comelec installed Abbago as Danglas mayor two weeks ago.

But entering the municipal hall proved to be another obstacle. Even with 25 policemen in tow, Abbago and about 1,000 of his men took four hours to finally enter the hall on March 19.

At least 100 of Borbon's men barricaded themselves in front of the town hall's entrance.

When Abbago and the police finally broke through the barricade, they found the second floor of the municipal hall padlocked. *Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

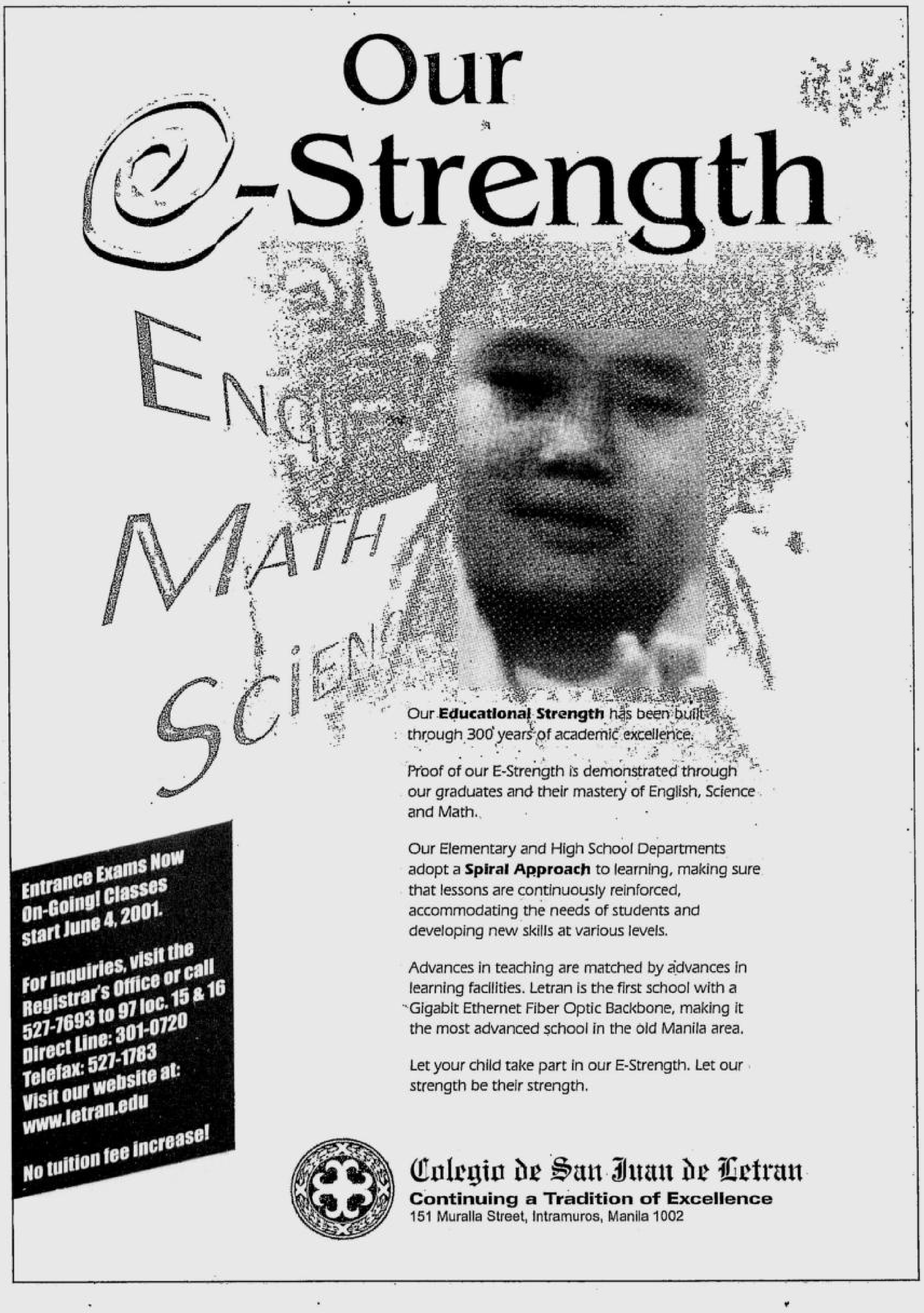
Comelec reconsiders decision on Bajunaid

DIGOS CITY—The Commission on Elections has reconsidered an earlier decision declared Prof. Moner Bajunaid a nuisance candidate in the senatorial race.

Bajunaid, who is running under the Philippine Democratic Socialist Party (PDSP), said the Comelec has finally included him in the amended list of senatorial candidates.

"I felt justice has been done. I can finally resume my campaign," he said.

Bajunaid, a former professor of the Mindanao State University in General Santos City, served as chair of the technical committee of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's committee on the peace process. *Allan Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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DEV'T OF CLARK AIRPORT

Pressure on GMA from home front

BY TONETTE OREJAS
Pampanga

NO matter how diverse the pressures they have put on President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Move Clark Now (MCN) and the Pinoy Gumising Ka Movement (PGKM) have said the same thing: Make economic growth really happen, make the Clark International Airport (CIA) the country's new international gateway.

Judging from press statements in the last two months, the PGKM has been more confrontational and hostile. The MCN, on the other hand, has pushed the issue through tempered debates and earnest pleas.

Both groups had challenged the Estrada administration and had not progressed even an inch toward their common goal. They're saying the same thing to the Macapagal administration and to prove further their point, they have broadened their ranks to include stakeholders based at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Will they get anywhere? The MCN's Alex Cauguiran and the PGKM's Ruperto Cruz are confident.

"She promises to be a good president who will initiate an economic turnaround," Cauguiran said.

"We feel that with our own *cabalen* (province-mate) as president, she would be more sympathetic and move aggressively to realize our common aspirations," Cruz said.

AIR traffic control tower at the Clark International Airport.

FILE PHOTO

No policy

But the President has yet to issue a policy statement on the role of the CIA in national or regional economic development. In its absence, those in the aviation, tourism and other airport-related industries have not been keen at exploring the opportunities at Clark, Cauguiran and Cruz said.

The President, during a pre-Edsa II rally in Pampanga, had stopped at recognizing the neglect of deposed President Joseph Estrada in developing the airport.

Renato Diaz, presidential adviser for North Luzon, said the Macapagal administration would honor government contracts, including that one forged by Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco) for the construction of the Naia's Terminal 3 (Naia-3) that virtually mothballed the full operation and development of the CIA.

It will take a congressional order to scrap the contract entirely or lift its provisions on Clark's annual limit of 850,000 passengers until Naia-3 reaches its 10-million passenger quota in a span of three years.

Piatco has not yet made public its position regarding a proposal pushing for the transfer of its terminal project to Clark, according to Pampanga Rep. Oscar Rodriguez.

Idle jewel

The Clark International Airport has been primed to become the country's premier airport.

The bases conversion law in 1992 and two executive orders in 1994 guaranteed the accelerated development of the Clark Special Economic Zone (CSEZ) and the full progress of the CIA.

At least P1.3 billion has been spent since 1993 to rehabilitate the airport and install modern navigational equipment.

The Japanese-funded Central Luzon master plan, completed in 1995, put the CIA central in the design to make the region an "international transshipment hub serving Southeast Asian countries with free seaport and airport."

The Central Luzon Congressional Caucus, the Central Luzon Investment Council, the National Economic and Development Authority, the Department of Trade and Industry, and Clark Development Corp. favorably endorsed the establishment of the airport.

In 1997, the Ramos Cabinet approved Clark's master plan, whose key elements include a premier international airport, support and aviation-related facilities, and an inter-modal transport center linked to Metro Manila.

Then President Fidel Ramos issued Executive Order 174, which designated Clark as the future premier airport and recognized that the government has "committed the establishment of an international airport at Clark to its local and international lessors and investors."

These investors set up business in Clark, drawn by the promise that an international airport would assist in the efficient movement of their goods and services, Cauguiran said.

The 2,200-hectare national asset had erstwhile been described as the largest air force installation of the United States in the Asia Pacific. Converted for civilian use, it was expected to operate in 1998, accommodate 1.5 million passengers yearly, and run full blast by 2004.

Although operating now on a 24-hour basis for emergency landings of aircraft at the Naia, the CIA has had a few flights and scant cargoes in the last three years because the plans for its development were altered.

While then CDC and CIA Corp. (CIAC) president Rufo Colayco grappled with a policy problem, Estrada appointees at the airport sealed its fate.

Said Colayco in an outgoing letter on the priorities of Clark vis-à-vis Naia-3: "A clear policy direction must be immediately defined. Is Clark to replace or become merely an alternate airport to Manila?"

The direction was clear to Estrada appointees: "The stand of the CIAC is not to compete with the Naia but just to serve as a support international airport that will service the forecast excess passengers by the year 2005 and the arrival of new large aircraft."

Push going nowhere

Even the lobbying within the Estrada administration proved futile.

The Presidential Commission for the Central Luzon Growth Corridor under then Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II tried to prove the CIA's safety, security and operational readiness, and its advantages over the Naia and Sangley airport. A special task force on the CIA was even created.

The commission completed a study and found that the CIA meets international standards in terms of land area, runway, navigational aids and potentials for expansion.

The airport has not also gone without legislative support.

In 1988, Pampanga Rep. Francis Nepomuceno filed House Bill No. 6542 seeking the CIA's full utilization.

Manila Rep. Rosenda Ann Ocampo also filed a bill ascertaining the CIA's capability. Municipal councils have passed one resolution after another, urging Estrada to hasten the airport's development.

However, during the Estrada administration, plans for the airport that had already been institutionalized in laws and in corporate objectives, had not only been delayed but also altered, a review by the PGKM and the MCN showed.

The CIA will not replace the Naia. It will first be a cargo hub. It will first cater to chartered flights, limited to only 850,000 passengers a year. But even these were not being realized, resulting in "tremendous losses."

"At the core of the issue is the loss of opportunities for employment essential to the improvement of the quality of life of thousands of families. Opportunities for the opening and expansion of international markets essential to an export-driven economy have been lost. Opportunities to local manufacturers, entrepreneurs, service and agro-based industries dependent on the full development of the CSEZ have been also lost," the MCN said.

Crucial facility

The airport is being sought in a region that dealt with two major disasters in 1991.

Central Luzon was devastated by Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions, the world's worst during the last century. It was brought down to its knees by the closure of two American bases, the major sources of livelihood and social development funds for nearly a century.

Clark and Subic are now the country's major economic zones, but Clark has no active airport to speak of.

It is being sought in a region that ranked third highest, next to Metro Manila and Southern Tagalog, in terms of shares in gross regional domestic product.

By 1999, total exports in Central Luzon reached $2.36 billion or 7 percent of the national figure, indicating the need for an airport to hasten the movement of products.

Northern Luzon, where agricultural and tourism potentials are extremely high, also deserves the Clark airport.

Both Northern and Central Luzon were among the regions with the most number of overseas Filipino workers, labor reports said.

Interests at play

Philippine presidents have changed, but the interests of major players have remained, making it still inordinately difficult for the airport to really take off, according to the PGKM and the MCN in several reports.

Lucio Tan, the majority owner of the Naia-based Philippine Airlines, businessman Manuel Zamora and Piatco are among the big stakeholders to be affected by decisions on whether to honor the Naia-3 contract or to replace the Naia with the CIA.

Rolando Estabillo, PAL vice president for corporate communications, said it was unfair to blame the dismal state of affairs at Clark on Tan's aviation interest and on his friendship with Estrada.

Estabillo said the airline's decision to remain at the Naia was "a purely business" one.

Access to Clark, he noted, was limited because of the delayed construction of a new railway and its multilane highway.

But a CIAC official also blamed Estrada, saying he and his colleagues exercised voluntary restraint toward Tan's alleged effort to stop the development of Clark in deference to the ousted president.

Zamora, an Estrada friend, said he "never had a direct personal interest in Piatco." His Security Bank, which was partly funding the Piatco project, sold out its equity to a German funding institution.

If it appeared that chartered flights were being delayed at the Clark airport, Zamora said it was "perhaps because some persons were trying to protect PAL from any competition."

Ramos also has some explaining to do on the Piatco deal.

As the one who designated the CIA as the next premier international airport, he virtually killed his own creation when he allowed the contract, signed in 1997, to give the Naia the right to operate exclusively as an international gateway and to restrict the passenger limit at Clark.

Zamora, according to one source, pushed the contract by tapping his Marcos links within Ramos' circle.

Estrada maintained the exclusivity clause and the control on the number of passengers. Without the Naia, Metro Manila's economic growth, especially its tourism, hotel, ground handling and other service industries, would suffer a setback.

Inevitable

But the Naia and the airlines will have to confront the inevitable: the coming of new large aircraft.

Said CIAC in a report: "The fact remains that although the Naia is pursuing the Terminal 2 and Terminal 3 projects, the airport still has only one runway, which always gives it finite capacity. The Naia's 3,737-km runway, which is already at its optimum length, is not capable of accommodating the new large aircraft due to its marginal wingspan clearance. Further expansion to cope with the future heavier aircraft requirement is difficult due to its area and the existence of the South Superhighway and the Multinational Road.

"Considering the steady growth of traffic at the Naia and the estimated forecast of 13.97 million passengers in 2005, another international airport to accommodate the excess passengers is necessary. Thus, the CIA is an ideal place as the next international airport of the country."

HOMETOWN *Snapshots*

A song for the Bugkalots

INSPIRED by the transformation of the Bugkalot tribe from fierce headhunters to responsible partners for development, a musical artist has composed a song to honor the tribe's efforts in merging with the mainstream of society.

Genaro Basilio Jr., 35, said the "*Awit ng Bugkalot* (Song of the Bugkalot)" projects the ethnic identity of the tribe who was once called "Abacos," "Ibilaos" or "Ilongots" in the mountains of Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Aurora and Nueva Ecija during the 1950s because of their feared headhunting practices.

The composition came in the wake of government efforts to declare the Bugkalots a "Millennium Tribe."

"I was driven to make this song because of the tribe's inherent values to adopt peaceful ways of living and share their thoughts for the development of their kind and the environment," Basilio said.

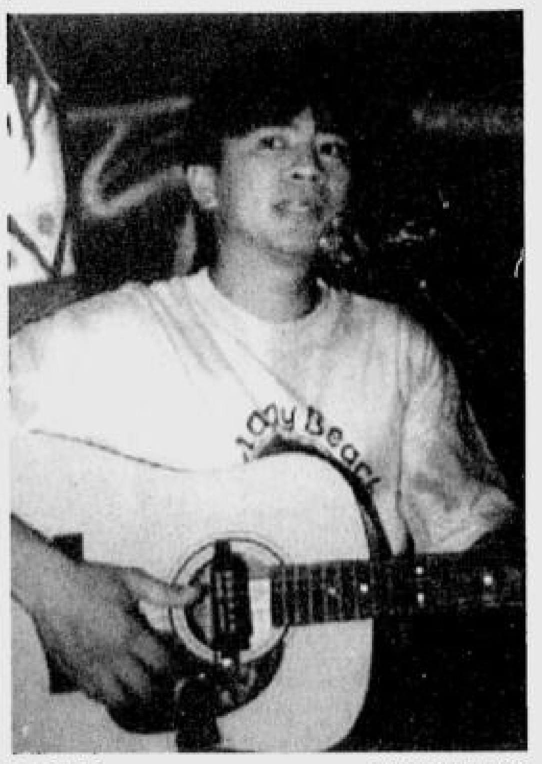
The three-minute musical piece, now being played in radio stations in Nueva Vizcaya, reflects the historical evolution of the tribe's culture and arts—ranging from the wearing of their traditional g-strings to their self-expression of peace.

It also praises the tribe for its courage and determination to face challenges and changes being brought by civilization.

"If we are to trace their past, the Bugkalots did headhunting as part of their culture. But, most importantly, it was made to repulse Spanish, Japanese and American forces," Basilio said.

It was in the 1960s when the Bugkalots started their bid to leave their primitive ways and slowly accept the mores of "civilized" society.

"The tribal members were then fighting for their independence because of foreign forces that wanted to conquer them in their land, their forests," Basilio said. ***Ben Moses Ebreo***



BASILIO

BEN MOSES EBREO

Local bet taps Internet

A JOURNALIST running for councilor in Baguio City has turned to the worldwide web to save on his campaign.

"Campaign finance is hard to come by and the Internet levels the playing field," says **Steve Hamada**, who is running for councilor under the Independent Baguio Alliance.

HAMADA

Hamada's relatives in Manila and the United States created his website (www.vote-stevehamada.com) highlighting his career in journalism and his advocacy for the environment.

In this university town with 50 Internet cafes, Hamada's online campaign might just work.

His website features his thrice-weekly column for a local daily, as well as the IBA agenda that seeks to "bring back Baguio to the people."

Text massages were used to advertise Hamada's website.

"Start at where expectations begin. That is, where one is neither a trader, an indigenous tribal member nor even an adopted kin. This is really where a Baguio person starts, as much as where he assumes himself," Hamada says. ***Frank Cimatu***

Pro-Estrada men eyeing House seats via party list

(From page A1)

and the People's Reform Party, respectively, win.

Two police generals associated with former Philippine National Police chief Panfilo Lacson were also nominated by party-list groups: Chief Supt. Romeo Acop of Bantay Bayan and Chief Supt. Jewel Canson of Mamamayan Ayaw sa Droga.

Lacson's son, Ronald Jay Lacson, is a nominee of the group Kabataan ng Masang Pilipino.

The Partido ng Masang Pilipino nominated former legislative liaison officer Jimmy Policarpio, Antique Mayor Raymundo Roquero and former Presidential Management Staff assistant secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla.

Former Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Ramon Cardenas was nominated by the group Progressive Alliance of Citizens for Democracy and former National Food Authority Administrator Eduardo Nonato Joson was listed by Ahonbayan. Former Caloocan Rep. Aurora Asistio Henson was named by the group Angat and former Estrada special assistant for the Visayas Marcelo Fernan Jr. was nominated by the Alay sa Bayan para sa Kalayaan at Demokrasya.

The Citizens Movement for Justice, Economy, Environment and Peace, a group believed to be associated with Estrada, will also join the party-list elections. The first of its five nominees is a certain Domingo Cayon.

Substitution

And take note, a lawyer at the Comelec law department said Estrada or his sons could even become, by substitution, party-list representatives of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino.

Under the party-list system, a voter writes a party-list group in his ballot. Each party-list group has to submit to the Comelec a list of at least five nominees.

A group that gets 2 percent of the total number of votes cast for the party-list system gets one seat in the House of Representatives. The one who sits in Congress is nominee number one.

If the group gets 4 percent of the votes cast, it sits nominees numbers one and two. If it gets 6 percent, it sits nominees one, two and three. Party-list groups are entitled to a maximum of three seats each.

The group's fourth and fifth nominees shall serve as reserves in case any of the three nominees could no longer represent the group due to resignation, expulsion from the group, death or disability.

The Comelec lawyer said Estrada, or even former first lady Imelda Marcos, could become party-list representatives in Congress under the rules on substitution of nominees if their groups get the required number of votes.

"This could happen if all the five nominees of the party withdraw their nomination before the closing of the voting on May 14 to make way for Estrada or Imelda," the lawyer said.

Withdrawal of and acceptance of nominations should be filed with the Comelec before the close of the polls.

A total of 162 groups are taking part in the party-list elections.

Republic Act 7941, the Party-List System Act, provides that party-list representatives shall constitute only 20 percent of the total number of House members. This means that party-list representatives can only get a maximum of 53 seats.

Among other prominent names listed by party-list groups as their nominees are actor Richard Gomez of the Mamamayan Ayaw sa Droga and singer Kuh Ledesma of the Pinatubo Party.

Former Philippine National Police chief Roberto Lastimoso is a nominee of Pusyon (Bisaya) Pilipinas, former Health Secretary Jaime Galvez Tan is a nominee of Aksyon Demokratiko and former student leader Jose Luis Gascon was listed by the Liberal Party.

Mocked

Relatives of politicians joining the party-list elections are Natalia Golez, wife of National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, of Go! Go! Philippines; Rene Velarde, son of El Shaddai leader Bro. Mike Velarde, of Buhay; businessman Thomas Orbos, brother of former Transportation Secretary Oscar Orbos, of Green Philippines; and Susana Ople Osorio, daughter of Sen. Blas Ople, of the Citizens Drug Watch.

Also seeking seats in Congress through the party-list system are Lauro Vizconde of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption; Capt. Proceso Maligalig of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa; Rita Gaddi Baltazar of the True Marcos Loyalists; perennial Makati City mayoralty candidate Sixto Brillantes of the Laban Para sa Kapayapaan, Katarungan at Kaunlaran; retired Gen. Orlando Soriano of the National Unification Alliance; lawyer-TV host Jose Sison Jr. of Ipaglaban Mo; and former Manila Councilor Grepor Belgica of Kabatas.

The party-list system was introduced in the 1998 elections to enable small political parties and marginalized and underrepresented sectors to have representation in the House of Representatives.

The Constitution identified eight of these sectors: labor, peasants, fisherfolk, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, disabled, youth and women. The Party-List System Act added four more sectors: elderly, veterans, overseas workers and professionals.

The Comelec lawyer said the list of nominees submitted by party-list groups showed that "the spirit of the party-list system is being mocked."

"Are these people really representatives of marginalized sectors, or the isolated elite who want to grab power?" the lawyer asked.

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No. 04-002-2001

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PLEASE be advised that Dao Heng Bank is no longer accredited by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) effective February 16, 2001 while Asian Bank has already merged its system with Global Bank. As such, the latter has started collecting Medicare premium contributions since October 16, 2000.

Meanwhile, PCI Bank has also merged with Equitable Banking Corporation which is now known as Equitable-PCI Bank.

Additional banks already accredited by PhilHealth are Premiere Development Bank, Bangko Pasig and just recently, Bank One Savings and Trust Company which has started accepting Medicare contributions last March 16, 2001.

By April 1, Century Savings Bank will start accommodating payments for Medicare premium made by PhilHealth members.

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12. International Exchange Bank
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15. Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company
16. Philippine Business Bank
17. Philippine National Bank
18. Philippine Postal Savings Bank, Inc.
19. Philippine Veterans Bank
20. Planters Development Bank
21. Premiere Development Bank
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It's 13-0 again vs Erap in high court ruling

(From page A1)

In arriving at the decision that Estrada was no longer president, the high court said it used the "totality test"—meaning, events "prior, contemporaneous and posterior" to Ms Macapagal's oath-taking were analyzed.

It cited 23 outstanding events, starting with the "jueteng" expose of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson in October 2000, up to the point when Estrada himself volunteered the idea of a "snap" election on Jan. 19, 2001.

The tribunal dismissed Estrada's claim that he was a victim of prejudicial publicity that the justices allegedly favored in arriving at their earlier decision.

It likewise dismissed his complaint that the justices relied heavily on the "hearsay" account of former Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara.

Angara's three-day diary of the events that led to Estrada's exit from Malacañang was published in the INQUIRER on Feb. 4-6, 2001.

The tribunal also rejected the arguments of Estrada's lawyers that he was acquitted by the Senate impeachment court, thus demolishing their claim that his prosecution by the Ombudsman would be tantamount to double jeopardy.

Earlier in the day, about 400 members of party-list organizations and multi-sectoral groups picketed the Supreme Court compound in the country's summer capital.

Lawyer Luzviminda Puno, clerk of court, called on members of the Council for Philippine Affairs (Copa) at about 1:30 p.m. and assured them that the tribunal's ruling would be issued within 15 days.

Members of Copa, Bayan Muna and the other groups, some of them coming from Manila, dismantled the picket. About two hours later, Puno released copies of the decision to reporters.

Copa chair Pastor "Boy" Saycon had earlier threatened to name the five justices allegedly partial to the ousted president.

Respondents

Estrada's petition had named as respondents Ms Macapagal, Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption and Graft-Free Philippines Foundation Inc., and lawyers Ramon Gonzales, Leonard de Vera, Dennis Funa, Romeo Capulong and Ernesto Francisco Jr.

As on March 2, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban inhibited themselves from the vote.

While all six justices appointed by Estrada during his tenure concurred with the resolution, Associate Justices Consuelo Ynares-Santiago and Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez maintained their separate opinions as stated in the March 2 decision.

But separate concurring opinions by Associate Justices Jose C. Vitug and Vicente V. Mendoza were attached to the resolution issued yesterday.

Admissible evidence

The tribunal reiterated its ruling that the Angara diary was admissible as evidence and was not considered hearsay.

"The Angara diary is not an out-of-court statement. The diary is part of the pleadings in the cases at bar and the petitioner cannot complain that he was not furnished a copy of the diary, nor can he feign surprise on its use. To be sure, the diary was frequently referred to by the parties in the pleadings," the tribunal said.

It said the diary was used "to decipher the intent to resign on the part of the petitioner."

"Let it be emphasized that it is not unusual for courts to distill a person's subjective intent from the evidence before them," it said.

It also said that while the diary was not Estrada's, the doctrine of "adoptive admission" made it conclusive to the court.

According to the tribunal, an adoptive admission is a party's reaction to a statement or action by another person when it is reasonable to treat the party's reaction as an admission of something stated or implied by the other person.

The high court said that Angara was Estrada's alter ego and that the diary showed that the then executive secretary "was authorized by Estrada to act for him in the critical hours and days before he abandoned Malacañang Palace."

It also maintained that it did not stop with the Angara diary in determining whether Estrada had indeed resigned.

It said it also assessed his own press release, issued after Ms Macapagal's oath-taking, which "confirmed his resignation."

The tribunal also dismissed Estrada's contention that there was no leadership vacuum when he left Malacañang because it was only Congress that had the power to decide a president's inability to discharge his functions.

It said that the president's inability to govern was not always a requisite before the vice president took over, and that there should be special consideration given to the events that, "at express speed," led to Estrada's resignation on Jan. 20.

"Congress was then not in session and had no reasonable opportunity to act a priori on Estrada's letter claiming inability to govern," the tribunal said.

'De jure'

In upholding the legitimacy of the Macapagal administration, the high court said there were acts that established the "*de jure*," or legally recognized status of the government.

It was referring to Resolution 176 passed by the House of Representatives supporting Ms Macapagal's assumption of the presidency.

It also cited Resolutions 82 and 178 of the House and Senate, respectively, that confirmed Sen. Teofisto Guingona's nomination as Vice President.

The tribunal also cited the bills sent to Ms Macapagal, to be signed by her as President of the country.

"These acts of Congress cannot be dismissed as merely implied recognitions" of Ms Macapagal as President, it said.

The tribunal also said Estrada's claim that Ms Macapagal was just a "*de facto*," or acting President was "guesswork far divorced from reality to deserve further discussion."

In further demolishing Estrada's claim of immunity, the high court said he had already resigned and relinquished his post to a new President.

Estrada as a non-sitting President cannot claim immunity for his alleged criminal acts committed while sitting as President, it said.

Neither can he claim double jeopardy following the non-completion of the impeachment proceedings, it added.

"The impeachment proceedings were closed only after Estrada resigned from the presidency, thereby rendering the impeachment court *functus officio* (moot and academic)," the tribunal said, adding:

"By resigning from the presidency, (Estrada) more than consented to the termination of the impeachment case against him for he brought about the termination of the proceedings."

Trial by publicity

The high court also dismissed Estrada's claim that he was a victim of trial by publicity that had prejudged his innocence.

It said that the claim was exaggerated, and that there was not enough evidence to show the supposed bias against him.

The tribunal also chided Estrada for asking all the justices to inhibit themselves from hearing his petition.

"There is no ground to inhibit the 12 members of this court who merely accepted the invitation of Arroyo to attend her oath-taking," it said.

"As mere spectators of a historic event, said members of the court did not prejudge the legal basis of the claim of Arroyo to the presidency at the time she took her oath," it added.

Totality test

In issuing its resolution, the tribunal cited certain events, which, it said, Estrada had not disputed. These are:

- Singson's jueteng expose.
- Guingona's "I accuse" speech at the Senate.
- The joint investigation of the Senate blue ribbon committee and the House committee on justice on the charges against Estrada.
- The investigation of the House committee on public order and security on Singson's expose.
- The House's impeachment move against Estrada.
- Jaime Cardinal Sin's pastoral letter demanding Estrada's resignation, and similar demands by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos.
- The resignations of Ms Macapagal as social welfare secretary, of Manuel Roxas II as trade secretary, and of Estrada's senior economic advisers.
- The defection of Senate President Franklin Drilon, Speaker Manuel Villar and 47 congressmen from Estrada's Lapian ng Masang Pilipino.
- The transmission of the articles of impeachment to the Senate.
- The removal of Drilon and Villar as Senate President and Speaker.
- Estrada's impeachment trial and the testimony of Equitable PCI Bank executive Clarissa Ocampo and former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu.
- The 11-10 vote stopping the opening of the second envelope containing evidence on the "Jose Velarde" account.
- The prosecutors' walkout and resignation and the indefinite postponement of the impeachment proceedings.
- The protests at the Edsa Shrine and the intensification of anti-Estrada rallies in various parts of the country.
- The withdrawal of support of Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes, and Director General Panfilo Lacson of the Philippine National Police.
- The resignations of Cabinet secretaries and their subordinates.
- Estrada's call for a "snap" election and the opening of the second envelope. ***With reports from Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; and Michael Lim Ubac in Manila***

Arrest Erap now, militants urge gov't

(From page A1)

SUPREME Court compound in Baguio is picketed by members of the Council for Philippine Affairs, Bayan Muna and other multi-sectoral groups demanding for the early ruling on Estrada's claim to the presidency.

"That's the beginning of the end for him, and it is totally expected. It paves the way for the filing of plunder cases against him. It exposes him to plunder where he is not entitled to bail," Arroyo said.

Both candidates served as public prosecutors at Estrada's impeachment trial.

Estrada lawyer Rene Saguisag expressed surprise at the timing of the high court's ruling, but withheld comment on the decision itself.

He said in a statement that Estrada's legal panel should immediately convene "to discuss what to do next."

In a separate statement, Jesus Crispin Remulla, a spokesperson of the Estrada-backed Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Puwersa ng Masa (LDP-PnM), said the disgraced leader was "ready to face the consequences of this court ruling."

But he said "we are also frightened by the SC ruling in the sense that clearly, we are no longer operating in a society based on the rule of law, but of a society subject to pressure by the mob."

LDP spokesperson Demaree Raval said the campaign of the LDP-PnM candidates would not be affected by the tribunal's ruling.

"President Estrada can more than take care of himself, and the candidates have campaign schedules to meet," Raval said in a statement. "Nothing has changed except for the intensity to win, and win big."

Ms Macapagal's spokesperson Renato Corona said Malacañang was "happy and pleased" with the tribunal's ruling, which, he also pointed out, was "not unexpected."

"We were really expecting that since there was no new matter that was brought in" by Estrada and his lawyers in the motion for reconsideration, Corona said.

He expressed the hope that "the Ombudsman will attend to this as soon as possible because the people are waiting."

Arrest order

Corona said Estrada's arrest and detention was not "within Malacañang's power and prerogative."

"It is dependent on the Ombudsman and the Sandiganbayan, which will issue the arrest order if it determines that there is a need to issue the warrant," he said.

Estrada had earlier warned that there would be violence if he was arrested because his supporters were determined to help him.

But Corona dismissed this, saying: "As far as (Estrada's) fear of being harmed (is concerned), we assure him that he will not be harmed. Everything will be done in a lawful, constitutional manner. Anyway, he has his lawyers to defend his interest and to defend him before the Ombudsman and the Sandiganbayan."

Corona said that with the high court's ruling, the government was "closing a chapter and opening the door to a future where this issue has finally been settled."

"We hope nothing of this sort will ever happen again," he said.

Corona advised Estrada to now "direct his energies to more productive endeavors, like really helping the poor."

Satur Ocampo, president of the party-list group Bayan Muna, said the police and military should guard all exit points in the country to prevent Estrada from fleeing.

"The administration must ensure that Estrada will face trial on the various plunder and criminal charges filed against him," Ocampo said.

But he pointed out that Estrada's arrest would only be possible if the Supreme Court lifted the temporary restraining order it imposed on the Ombudsman.

"There's no reason why the Supreme Court should not allow the Ombudsman to finally charge Estrada. The very reason why Estrada isn't charged yet has already been resolved," Ocampo said.

He added: "We should give justice to Edsa II . . . (The President) should fast-track the filing of charges and order Estrada's arrest, if she really means business."

Saguisag said Estrada's lawyers received the comments of the government to their motion for reconsideration "only last Friday and yesterday."

"Dean Pacifico Agabin, Atty. Cleofe Verzola and I have asked for a reargument since many issues need to be clarified, as also sought by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines. However, we have gotten word that the Supreme Court has denied our two motions for reconsideration," he said.

Puwersa candidates

LDP-PnM senatorial candidates had varying reactions to the high court's ruling.

Edgardo Angara, Estrada's executive secretary whose diary of his final days in Malacañang had been cited by the high court, said he was "saddened" by it.

"This is part of the judicial process, and unless the SC has so declared, the decision is not yet final and may be revisited," he said in a brief statement faxed to the INQUIRER.

Like Angara, reelectionist Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, one of Estrada's allies at the impeachment trial, said he would withhold comment until he had read the full text of the decision.

"I'd like to see what would develop after this. I don't think it would affect our campaign because we stand on our own merit," Enrile told the INQUIRER in a phone interview from Bacolod City.

On the other hand, Orlando Mercado, Estrada's defense chief, said: "It's time to move forward. We have no choice but to follow the Supreme Court decision and let the evidence stand for the courts to determine the guilt or innocence of President Estrada." Mercado, who withdrew support from Estrada along with the military leadership at the height of People Power II, said he hoped that the ruling would finally remove the issue of Estrada's ouster and the Macapagal presidency from the election campaign.

Backlash

But reelectionist Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, also of the LDP-PnM said that if charges were filed against Estrada and he was jailed, there would be a backlash that could redound to the benefit of the opposition party.

"The underdog factor will most likely produce an electoral backlash among the masses . . . Jailing Estrada will most likely unleash a tidal wave of sympathy, not only for him, but (also) for his senatorial ticket," Santiago said in a statement.

"On the other hand, if the charges are not filed before election day, President Estrada would remain free to roam the countryside and campaign for his senatorial ticket, thus, increasing our margin of victory," she added.

The LDP campaign manager, Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino, described the ruling as a mere "reconfirmation of an earlier mistake."

But PPC candidate Ernesto Herrera said the ruling sent a very strong signal to grafters in the government.

"The decision paves the way for the funeral of Erap's Puwersa ng Masa. It's their political death. I think this is the victory of the people," he said.

"Clearly, it shows that People Power II was a legitimate exercise of the popular will, and I believe that those who were mere spectators at Edsa would now support the administration," said his co-candidate Francis Pangilinan.

Other comments from the PPC candidates:

"Beautiful. I think now the ball is in the hands of the DOJ"—Manuel Villar.

"That finally clears the air"—reelectionist Sen. Juan Flavier.

Protest caravan

In Baguio City, the two-day protest caravan of Manila-based anti-Estrada forces ended on a happy note with the Supreme Court's 13-0 vote.

"This is a welcome development and we hail the Supreme Court for listening to the clamor of the people for justice against Estrada. Now, the burden shifts from the Supreme Court to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," said Bayan Muna deputy director Robert de Castro.

Carol Araullo, vice chair of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said that with the decision, the "pressure point" would now shift from the tribunal to the Ombudsman and eventually the Sandiganbayan.

"We demand that the Ombudsman swiftly dispatch the 13 plunder cases we filed against Estrada, especially because these cases are punishable by death, so that the Sandiganbayan can immediately issue a warrant of arrest," she said.

Rep. Rene Magtubo, formerly of the party-list group Sanlakas and now chair of the labor party-list Partidong Manggagawa, also expressed elation over the ruling and said the government should vigorously pursue the plunder cases against Estrada. ***With reports from Armand N. Nocum, Dona Pazzibugan, Martin P. Marfil, Andrea T. Echavez, Christian V. Esguerra and Juliet L. Javellana***

Texters overwhelm 'TXT GMA'

(From page A1)

complaints, to job inquiries, and the usual requests for assistance.

There were messages asking the President to investigate "jueteng" activities in their areas while others gave her advice, including one that asked her to be wary of "traitors like Ramos and Chavit." Apparently, the message sender was referring to former President Fidel Ramos and Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

And yes, lewd messages managed to get in too—from obscene jokes to off-color messages, including an invitation for phone sex addressed to the President.

But these pranksters will not get away with this, warned PACE action officer Eric Diaz. PACE sent the numbers of these "texters" to the authorities for tracing and proper action.

Roasted cow

The President also got an offer from an entrepreneur: "*Nag-aalok po kami sa inyo ng litsong baka d2 po sa Clamba, s Frankies Roasted Cow. Maraming salamat po kung oorder po kyo.* God bless (We offer you roasted calf from Calamba, Frankies Roasted Cow. We would thank you very much if you will place an order)."

Another intrepid "texter" sent the message: "*Ano gawa mo? Gimik tayo* (What are you doing? Want to go out)?"

There were also "classified" messages and "texters" were advised to come personally to PACE to give more details to the information they sent.

Diaz said they grouped the text messages into "legitimate text" for suggestions, requests for help and expressions of support; "trash" for unintelligible messages, unanswerable questions and simply weird messages including the offer for roasted calf; and "lewd."

Deleted

Those in the "trash" and "lewd" message groups are deleted.

One action officer said that once, they responded to a lewd message with the reply, "Thank you for texting us."

One persistent lewd "texter" sent the same message twice. His number was sent to the National Telecommunications Commission for tracing and proper action.

Diaz appealed to the public not to send jokes or lewd messages. They not only clog the computers, they also give the action officers a big headache, he said.

Diaz said "texters" with legitimate requests and concerns should write their name, address and other contact numbers. This way, they could be properly referred to the appropriate agencies.

The "TXT GMA" center has six stations or computers attached to phones provided by telecommunications giants Globe Telecom and Smart Communications.

The messages are printed out, including the responses given to the "texters."

A group that included Presidential Management Staff head Vicky Garchitorena conceptualized the "texting" program early into the Macapagal presidency.

According to Diaz, Garchitorena noted that the "texting" mania had contributed to the huge turnout of people at the People Power II rallies. Recognizing this phenomenon and the impact of text messages, the group thought "texting" could also be a way to make the President more accessible to her constituents.

After engineers were able to fix the power supply problem at 3 p.m., text messages for the President started streaming in again.

The text center operates seven days a week, from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The Globe cell phone numbers are: 0917-TXTGMA (8398462), 0917-TXT2GMA (8982462) and 0917-TXTKGMA (8985462). The Smart cell phone numbers are: 0919-TXTGMA1 (8984621), 0919-TXTGMA2 (8984622) and 0919-TXTGMA3 (8984623).

Suspect in Dacer case abducted, says NBI chief

(From page A1)

Wycoco said sketchy reports reaching his office confirmed that armed men in civilian clothes picked up De Pedro from his house, also in Buna Lejos II. The NBI led by its National Capital Region (NCR) Division is probing into the other details of the incident.

NCR chief Samuel Ong theorized that the suspects are being eliminated to shield the brains behind the Dacer abduction.

Ong said an unseen hand was maneuvering to silence even those who did not participate but witnessed the killing of the public relations practitioner and his driver.

In a new conference at Camp Crame on Monday, Philippine National Police Chief Director General Leandro Mendoza said that his predecessor, Panfilo "Ping"Lacson, also the former PAOCTF head, who's now an opposition senatorial candidate, has not been dropped as a possible suspect in the Dacer case.

"Considering that Lacson's men were involved, the former PAOCTF chief may have to do some explaining for the role of his men," Mendoza said.

Lacson has denied any involvement in the nearly five-month old Dacer disappearance. He has accused his political opponents of doing a demolition job on him.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said that his department would welcome an explanation from deposed President Estrada about Dacer's visit to the Palace two days before he disappeared.

Former President Fidel Ramos was at the Department of Justice (DOJ) on Monday to submit documents, which he believes, might help the investigation.

But Perez said that the DOJ would only summon Estrada if it becomes "necessary."

Looking for their husbands

The NBI learned of De Pedro's abduction after the wives of Digo and the Malabanan brothers went to the NBI main office in Manila to inquire about their spouses' whereabouts.

"They thought that the NBI picked up for questioning their husbands so they went here to ask for them. But they're not here," said Ong.

The wives of the Malabanans said their husbands were missing since Sunday. But they were not sure if they were just hiding or had been abducted.

But De Pedro's wife confirmed that unidentified men abducted her husband.

Ong had dispatched 20 of his men to Indang, Cavite, to ascertain the veracity of the report. "Except for Diloy and Lopez, none of the suspects named in the charge sheet have found," he said.

Yesterday, Wycoco ordered his men to tighten security measures on suspects Jimmy Lopez and Rex Diloy who have already turned state witness. "They have been placed under the government's Witness Protection Program by Justice Secretary Perez," he said.

Diloy and Lopez confessed to have witnessed the gruesome killing from the time Dacer and his driver were reportedly strangled to the moment they were doused with gasoline and burned.

"Even their families are now in the NBI for fear that they might be liquidated too. They told us that it's much safer at the NBI than at their homes," Wycoco told reporters during the Bulong Pulungan forum at the Westin Philippine Plaza in Pasay City.

Despite the missing suspects, Wycoco is confident the NBI's investigation will not be derailed. "Since the corpus delicti (body of the crime) is now with us, we can still solve it," said Wycoco, referring to the bones and teeth allegedly belonging to the two victims that are now undergoing DNA testing by the NBI forensics and chemistry division.

Other suspects

The NBI nabbed Diloy and Lopez in a pre-dawn operation Wednesday conducted by at least 40 NCR agents. Along with eight others, the two were charged on Thursday with double murder charges before the DOJ.

The other suspects are PAOCTF agents SPO4 Marino G. Soberano, SPO3 Mauro Torres, SPO3 Jose Escalante and SPO1 Crisostomo Purificacion.

Whose shoes?

Wycoco admitted that the Lumberjack topsider recovered from Diloy was not Dacer's or Corbito's. "We don't know who owns it. But it does not belong to either Dacer or Corbito," he said.

Diloy claimed that the pair of shoes—originally white but was dyed brown—was given to him at the crime scene. Initially, it was believed to be Dacer's but the latter's family has denied this.

Sabina Dacer-Reyes, Dacer's second daughter told the INQUIRER she does not recall her dad owning a Lumberjack. It's very unlikely.

Sabina said she looked after the personal belongings of her father who is a widower.

Even Corbito's wife, Mora, told the NBI that the shoes did not belong to her husband. Sabina said that Mora also noted that the shoe size would not have fitted Dacer.

"I have already ordered the NCR to determine the ownership of the pair of shoes. But right now we're still unsure on its implications on the ongoing investigation," Wycoco added.

Lacson vs Corpuz

Lacson accused Intelligence Service of the AFP (Isafp) chief Col. Victor Corpuz of involvement in the alleged smear campaign against him. Corpuz is conducting a parallel investigation into the Dacer case.

Lacson claimed that he is now afraid for his and his family's lives since Corpuz is part of the so-called demolition job.

"*Mukhang mabibigat na ang kalaban kapag sumama na ang* Isafp chief. For the first time, I feel that even my life is in danger, even that of my family," he said in a statement.

"Colonel Corpuz does not deserve to be Isafp chief any minute longer. He does not even deserve to be in the military. He's a disgrace to the uniform," he went on.

Lacson at the same time accused the administration of planning to implicate him to the disappearance of Pagcor employee Edgar Bentain and the Dec. 30, 2000 bombings in Metro Manila.

Bentain, who gave former censors chief Manuel Morato a videotape showing Estrada playing high-stakes baccarat with alleged gambling lord Charlie "Atong" Ang in a casino, disappeared shortly after Estrada assumed the presidency in 1998.

The Dec. 30 bombings had raised suspicions that they were meant to divert the public's attention from Estrada's impeachment trial in the Senate. ***With reports from Christine Herrera, Cathy Yamsuan and Volt Contreras***

Arizona followers turn rowdy

TUCSON, Arizona —Disappointed Arizona fans overturned at least two cars, tore down street signs and set small fires following the Wildcats' loss in the NCAA tournament.

No injuries were immediately reported.

Several hundred people jamming one intersection near the University of Arizona campus Monday night were met by about 50 officers in riot gear while a helicopter circled overhead.

Assistant Police Chief Roberto Villasenor said officers would not move in on the crowd unless there was an overwhelming reason to do so.

Duke won its third national championship Monday night, defeating Arizona 82-72. *AP*

Barcials rule scooter meet

CARMONA, Cavite—The highly rated Barcial brothers finally completed a double celebration on April Fool's Day with Jaime winning the expert open category and younger brother Mark Anthony dominating the 70cc class in the second leg of the Shell Super Scooter Championships at the Carmona Racing Circuit.

Buoyed by his smashing victory over the same rivals in the kickoff leg on March 11, Jaime Barcial held off the challenge of Edwin Buenaventura, Mark Chua and two-time champion Jolet Jao to clinch the win in this prestigious series organized by the E.L. Racing Tech and sponsored by Shell.

"*Masayang-masaya ako dahil nanalo uli ako* (I'm happy I won again)," said Barcial, who is enjoying one of his finest starts since acquiring a brand-new 2001 model Yamaha.

The win—the fourth in as many races—enabled Barcial to pull away in the overall standings of the expert open category with a perfect score of 80 points under the 20-17-15-13-11 scoring system.

Buenaventura finished second overall, followed by Chua in third and Jao in fourth.

Jao, who is seeking an unprecedented third straight overall title, struggled in his old model Yamaha and finished out of the magic circle for the second straight leg.

Jao finished only fifth in a tie with Benjo Mendoza in the first leg last month.

Barcial's younger brother, Mark Anthony, also stamped his class over first-leg winner Sonny Villarama, John Dino Cahanding, Dennis Chua and Lucky Loya.

The day's only other big winner was Ivan Santiago, who completed a sweep of the 50cc Yamaha and 50cc multi-brand categories over R.B. Santos and Robert Altea. Santiago also finished fifth in the open class.

The other second-leg winners were Gilbert Maningas, who topped the 90cc class over Loya, Chua, Cahanding and Villarama; Anthony Yamson, who dominated the 50cc Honda over Edwin Obiena, Oliver Navarro, Kim de Leon and Joseph Utanes; and Chito Barcenas, who ruled the Force 1 over De leon, Geoffrey Aguisanda, Edward Gonzaga and B.J. Loyola.

Duke bags 3rd NCAA title

REUTERS

WILLIAMS (22) and his teammates whoop it up after the Blue Devils subdued the Wildcats.

Devils raze Wildcats, 82-72

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota— The Duke Blue Devils led the entire second half and dominated the final five minutes to hold off the Arizona Wildcats 82-72 to win the NCAA national championship on Monday.

Mike Dunleavy was the high scorer for Duke with 21 points, 18 in the second half. He also had five 3-pointers, four in the second half.

Loren Woods had 22 points and 11 rebounds for Arizona.

Arizona mounted a rally from an 11-point deficit. But Duke's Shane Battier scored six points down the stretch and set up a key screen to free Jason Williams for a three-pointer to put Duke up 80-72.

Arizona did not score a point after 2:50 was left in the game.

It was Duke's third National Championship. The Blue Devils won in 1991 and 1992. Duke joined North Carolina with three national titles. Only UCLA (11), Kentucky (7) and Indiana (5) have more.

"It's complete," Battier said of his career. "All that's left for me is to ride off into the sunset on a white horse. I love my guys — we fought, we fought, it was a great year, and this is just the perfect way for us to end it."

Dunleavy said: "Our will and heart came out on top. I was hot and they got the ball to me in the second half," said Dunleavy.

Duke connected on 47 percent (30-of-64) of its shots, including 9-of-27 from beyond the arc.

Three of those 3-pointers came by Dunleavy in a 46-second span early in the second half. With his father — Portland Trail Blazers coach Mike Dunleavy in attendance — the younger Dunleavy scored 18 second-half points and sparked an 11-2 burst that put Duke ahead by 11.

Arizona's Richard Jefferson, who had 19 points, said: "It's always tough to lose. We wanted this so much for our coach and Bobbie (Olson, the late wife of coach Lute Olson who died earlier this year).

"They outplayed us down the stretch. They seemed to get all the loose balls and we missed open shots. We worked so hard to get here I can't believe this ended this way."

Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski, who equaled Bobby Knight with three national championships, said: "I am so happy, so proud of these young men, although I have feeling for coach Olson. Our young men weren't supposed to win this year. We had lost a couple of times when we were favored and this is especially sweet."

Hingis tells stalker: 'Get out of my life'

MIAMI —Swiss tennis star Martina Hingis said Monday in the trial of her alleged stalker that she once decided to speak to the defendant in person to tell him to leave her alone but it did no good.

"I told him he should get out of my life, I didn't want to talk with him anymore, I wouldn't want to spend any time with him," the world's No. 1 woman player testified. "I told him he should go away and get out of my life."

Dubravko Rajcevic is charged with one count of stalking and three counts of trespassing at last year's Ericsson Open on Key Biscayne, Florida. He faces up to a year in jail if convicted of stalking and three counts of trespassing, all misdemeanors.

Hingis said the conversation between her and Rajcevic took place in June 1999, after the French Open. The tennis star, then 18 years old, said she spoke to Rajcevic through a gate at her Swiss home after her manager, Mario Widmer, suggested she tell Rajcevic in person that she did not want anything to do with him.

HINGIS

China giant all set for historic debut

DALLAS— Chinese giant Wang Zhizhi is already well on his way to learning what it takes to play basketball among the world's best.

Wang will become the first Asian player in the NBA when he signs a two-year contract with the Dallas Mavericks here on Wednesday morning.

The 24-year-old center, whose deal will be worth nearly $800,000, completed a fourth day of private twice-a-day workouts here Monday in anticipation of his NBA debut here Thursday (Friday in Manila) against Atlanta.

Mavericks special assistants Morlon Wiley and Greg Dreiling, both big men, have worked with Wang and assistant coach Donnie Nelson in practice scrimmages designed to simulate conditions Wang will face in games.

"We've kind of banged him up a little bit and put him through a little conditioning," Wiley said.

Wang will join German forward Dirk Nowitzki, Canadian guard Steve Nash and Mexico's Eduardo Najera to make Dallas the most international club in NBA history, with a roster one-third stocked by non-US talent.

The Mavericks, 47-26, can seal an NBA playoff spot by winning Tuesday at Houston.

Wang, who stands 7-foot-1 (2.16m) is staying in Nelson's suburban home as he adjusts to NBA lifestyles on and off the court. *AFP*

Toni says no

NEW YORK—Toni Kukoc, acknowledged as one of Croatia's all-time best basketball players, has said he will no longer represent his native country in international contests. *AFP*

Easter carnival hopefuls

WHAT CAN I SAY

Bebo Quiros

ROSEHILL Racecourse, Sydney Turf Club, 7 April 2001. Many eyes will be on the Gai Waterhouse-trained entry of Royal Courtship (3/1), Excellerator (8/2), Ha Ha (14/1), Red Hannigan (16/1) in the world's richest 2-yr-old race, the STC Golden Slipper Stakes over 1200 meters with prize money of Aud$2.5million. Early Tuesday morning, 3 April 2001, a mini-version of the Slipper was run when Gai sent out the top two favorites Excellerator, ridden by Chris Munce, and Royal Courtship, ridden by Brian York, over 600 meters on the Rosehill A grass course and flying home over the last furlong. Excellerator won the gallop by a half-length in 38 seconds with the last furlong in 11.6. While Royal Courtship seemed to struggle a bit, he was working without the blinkers which he will have on on Slipper day. Yorkie was not a bit disturbed with the work. Both he and Chris were smiling as they dismounted. Luck and the Slipper draw will determine who will be this year's best Australasian 2-yr-old.

Of interest to Pinoy race goers is the fact that Kuya Danding Cojuangco's Gooree Stud bred two of Gai's Slipper bets, the top favorite Royal Courtship and Red Hannigan, a sleeper at 16/1. Royal Courtship is a Royal Academy gelding out of the Gooree-bred Pre-Emptive Strike (Blushing Groom) mare So Striking, from an old Stanley Wootton family. "Courtship" was the winner of the STC Todman Slipper Trial (G2) over 1200meters and the AJC Kindergarten Stakes (G3) over 1100 meters, in his lead up campaign to this weekend's main feature. Red Hannigan, presumably named after one of Australia's pre-eminent stallions of the 1950's, is a Dehere out of another Gooree homebred mare, Vital Consent by Pre-Emptive Strike. He is a real live bet at this point having won last Saturday's Singapore Stakes (G2) also at Rosehill.

A week from Saturday on 14 April 2001, Gooree Stud has another hopeful in the San Miguel Doncaster Handicap over 1600 meters at Randwick Racecourse, the home of the Australian Jockey Club. Carrying ECJ's famous red and black silks will be the Lee Freedman-trained Mr Murphy, currently at 16/1 at the TAB and the bookmakers. Mr. Murphy is a 1998 graduate of the Inglis Easter Sales, a gelding by Danehill from Marscay's Dream by Marscay.

He has had a great run this season, dead heating with Desert Sky (Hurricane Sky) in the VATC Futurity Stakes (G1) 1400 meters and winning the VRC Cadbury Guineas (G1) 1600 meters, and the MVRC Mister Clark Stakes (G2) 1509 meters.

We wish Gooree Stud and all their connections the best of racing luck.

Barrier draw

Luck seems to be smiling on Gai Waterhouse. Her team which also includes the outsider Time Out, has been blessed by the racing gods. Royal Courtship drew barrier 8, Excellerator drew 3, Red Hannigan drew 6, Ha Ha drew 11 and Time Out drew 18. The complete field and barrier draw as follows:

AAMI Golden Slipper Stakes, 1200m
Run Saturday April 7

1.	ROYAL COURTSHIP	B York	(8)	55.5
2.	EXCELLERATOR	C Munce	(3)	55.5
3.	SPECTATORIAL	P Payne	(13)	55.5
4.	VISCOUNT	L Cassidy	(10)	55.5
5.	RED HANNIGAN	D Beasley	(6)	55.5
6.	TIME OUT	C Brown	(18)	55.5
7.	CORAL SALUTE	B Prebble	(16)	55.5
8.	MISTEGIC	J Sheehan	(12)	55.5
9.	REGAL KISS	D Oliver	(14)	52.5
10.	HA HA	J Cassidy	(11)	52.5
11.	TRUE JEWELS	K McEvoy	(7)	52.5
12	HOSANNAH	D Beadman	(17)	52.5
13	FAIZA	R M Quinn	(9)	52.5
14.	DONNA NATALIA	B Stewart	(4)	52.5
15.	SHOVOFF	L Beasley	(2)	52.5
16.	FAIR EMBRACE	G Cooksley	(1)	
		Emergencies		
17	NEWQUAY	—	(5)	55.5
18	MOONFLUTE	—	(15)	52.5

Top riders joining cycling tilt

WITH the leadership problem in the Philippine Amateur Cycling Association finally resolved, cycling tries to get back into high gear with the staging of a four-day event organized by the Philippine Cycling Management Corp. headed by its chair Ramon Medina and other businessmen.

"Since the Marlboro Tour was scrapped in 1998, the sport of cycling has been in a limbo and was negatively affected by the leadership problem in Paca," said Medina.

"PCMC is determined to pick up where others have left off and we want to serve as a catalyst in the birth of a new era in Philippine cycling through the establishment of a premiere cycling league that would include the members of the national training pool," he added.

The four-day event, slated April 28-29 and May 5-6, and sponsored by the SBMA, FedEx, and the PCSO, will feature 10 teams with eight members each, representing the cream of the crop of the local cycling world.

There will be a two-day qualifying event in Subic on April 7-8. The qualifying is open to both amateurs and professionals alike, including members of the national pool.

The final race, dubbed as the Philippine Cycling Challenge, will have four stages covering more than 800 kilometers.

Clemens leads Yankees win over Royals

NEW YORK—The New York Yankees began the defense of their world championship with Roger Clemens surpassing Walter Johnson's American League record for career strikeouts in a 7-3 victory over the Kansas City Royals on Monday.

Tino Martinez hit a solo home run, Bernie Williams a two-run blast and Jorge Posada put three runs up with his homer.

Clemens, who won the 261st game of his career, struck out Joe Randa for the first out of the ninth inning to notch the 3,509th strikeout of his career. *Reuters*

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Atlanta 10, Cincinnati 4; Montreal 5, Chicago Cubs 4, 10 innings; Colorado 8, St. Louis 0; San Francisco 3, San Diego 2; Philadelphia 6, Florida 5, 13 innings; Los Angeles 1, Milwaukee 0.

AMERICAN LEAGUE: N. Yankees [illegible], Kansas City 3; Chicago White Sox 7, Cleveland 4; Baltimore 2, Boston [illegible], [illegible] innings; Seattle 5, Oakland 4. *AP*

Strawberry arrested

TAMPA, Florida—Darryl Strawberry was arrested at a hospital Monday night, shortly after ending his four-day disappearance from a drug treatment center.

The troubled former slugger was taken into custody at St. Joseph's Hospital on a violation of probation warrant, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Debbie Carter said.

The 39-year-old former baseball star, who is also being treated for colon cancer, had not been seen since he left the Health Care Connection, a drug treatment center in Tampa, late Thursday.

First word that Strawberry was safe came from Ray Negron, a Cleveland Indians consultant who advised the former player when he played for the New York Yankees. *AP*

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: NBA—LA Lakers vs Utah Jazz at 8 a.m. (replay —8 p.m.) on ESPN

MOTOR SPORTS: Motorsport [illegible] at 1:30 p.m. (r) on ESPN

Max Power at 6 p.m. on Star Sports

SBK World Superbikes Championship 2001 at 7:30 p.m. on Star Sports

Race Day—Brazilian Grand Prix at 9 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

F1—Brazilian Grand Prix at 9:45 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

GOLF: The Masters Official Films - 1999 at 7 a.m. (r- 12:30 p.m. and tomorrow at 12:30 a.m.) on Star Sports

PGA Bellsouth Classic, Third Round at 8 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Golfglobe 2001 at 10 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

BASEBALL: MLB - Kansas City Royals vs New York Yankees at 10:30 a.m. (r) on ESPN

Baseball Max at 1 p.m. on ESPN

TRACK AND FIELD: IAAF Track & Field World Indoor Championships, (Lisbon), Highlights at 7 a.m. (r) on ESPN

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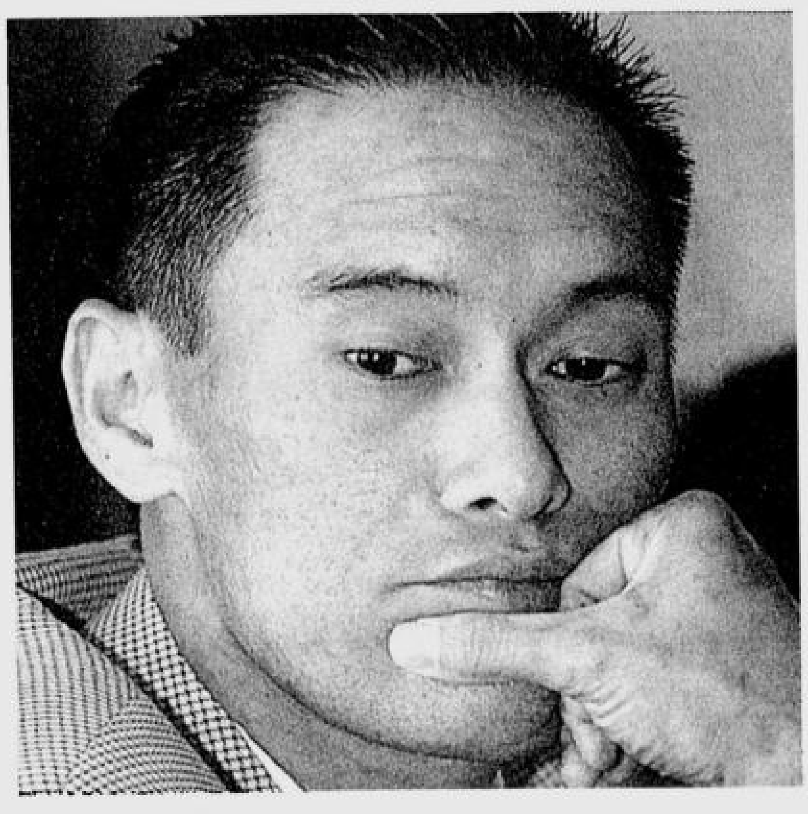
Tanduay, Tan 'play' today


TAN: Will he show up?

BERNARDINO: "Don't force me."

PBA STANDINGS

	W	L
Shell	9	4
SMB	8	4
Pop	7	5
Purefoods	7	6
Ginebra	6	6
Red Bull	6	6
Alaska	6	7
Mobiline	6	7
Tanduay	4	8
SLR	3	9

GAMES TODAY (Philsports)
5:15 p.m.—SLR vs Red Bull
7:30 p.m.—SMB vs Tanduay

IT'S GOING to be a busy day today for Tanduay Gold.

While the Rhummasters struggle to make the PBA All-Filipino Cup quarterfinals at the Philsports when they battle the San Miguel Beermen, Tanduay owner Bong Tan goes to the Commissioner's Office to air his side regarding remarks he allegedly made against the league last week.

Both tasks will have serious repercussions.

A loss for Tanduay in the 7:30 p.m. game will mean disqualification.

A Tan no-show, according to PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino, will force him to make an adverse decision against the Tanduay owner.

A Tanduay insider called up the Inquirer last night to say Tan will present himself today at the PBA offices at 1 p.m.

A top issue in today's agenda is Tan's alleged accusation that the PBA was favoring San Miguel Beer in that Bernardino is anti-Tanduay.

Tanduay manager Chito Bugia had earlier said they would send a representative if Tan would not be able to make it.

Batang Red Bull attempts to make a last-ditch effort to join the Top Four of the quarterfinals when it takes on also-ran Sta. Lucia Realty in the first game set at 5:15 p.m.

We have documents, Jun B says

PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino yesterday said the probe team tasked to dig into the alleged salary cap violation committed by Tanduay believes it has found substantial evidence to open a thorough investigation on the case.

In yesterday's PSA Forum, Bernardino said the documents presented by former Tanduay cager Jayvee Gayoso could incriminate Tanduay.

Bernardino said he would furnish Tanduay officials a copy of the document and would next ask them to comment on it.

"There is something to be pursued here," said Bernardino. "We will summon Tanduay officials and furnish them copies of the documents."

Gayoso submitted two checks and a certification of income issued by former Tanduay team manager David de Joya last week.

In the contract, Gayoso, acquired by Tanduay in 1999, signed a three-year contract that would pay him P1.680 million a year or a total of P5.040 million until 2001.

However, PBA finance officer Richard Palou noted that aside from Gayoso's P140,000 monthly take dispensed via the player's ATM, Tanduay also issued a check worth P480,000, separate from Gayoso's salary last year.

Bernardino said Tanduay stands to lose "some P20 million" if Tanduay is found guilty as charged.

"Rules state that teams found violating the salary cap automatically lose television earnings on the year that they have been found guilty," said Bernardino.

Bernardino also defended Basketball Association of the Philippines president Freddie Jalasco's earlier pronouncement of tapping PLDT owner Manny Pangilinan as godfather and official of the association.

During the BAP's last meeting on March 26, Bernardino said the BAP board hatched the idea in order to give the association's future programs a financial backbone.

"We will soon discuss the board's decision to tap Mr. Pangilinan basketball godfather," said Bernardino.

All-female pair tops Sta. Elena

ANOTHER all-female partnership won the overall crown in the prestigious Sta. Elena Cup as Nancy Co and Sheela Vanessa Kho bested a field of 180 teams over the weekend in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Nancy Co fired 47 points for two rounds and Kho carded 38-31 as the duo finished with 163 points, edging out EJ Villacorta and Rudy Estrellado for the overall plum.

Co and Kho succeeded the tandem of Vinice Godio-Cynthia Antonio as overall winner of this annual member-guest event.

Lady entries either won or shared the four other major awards out of the 12 disputed.

Therese Dabao-Lora Roberto ruled Class A and Lucille Carlos-Sand Squillantini prevailed in Class C.

The winners received their trophies and prizes last Sunday during the Awards Night hosted by Nokia Mobile Phones.

Boy de Borja and Philip Judan managed to avert a shutout when they topped Class B in the tournament sponsored by Rustan's Group of Companies, Audi, Toyota, Jomon Carpet, Diamond Motors, Volvo, Flying V, Shell, Ford Edsa, Kart Plaza, GG&A, Mayer Steel, Marsman, Drysdale, PX Depot, Paramount Vinyl, Las Vegas Golf, Blue Cross, Mirant Philippines.

The hole-in-one package included an Audi A4, Echo and a Camry from Toyota, a Yamaha cart, a Mitsubishi car and a Maxfli Revolution golf set. Steve Chan was the sole ace-maker, winning both the Maxfli set and the Yamaha cart.

Individual awards went to former national player Cookie La'O, whose four-under 68 gave him low gross honors; Abe Rosal low gross for 36 holes with his 70-71=141.

Co also won the low net award for 36 holes with his 162 while Paul Chuatico took the 18-hole trophy with his net 48.

Godio barely missed winning for the second straight year when she and new partner Toti Sara lost out by just two points to Dabao and Roberto.

Carlos and Squillantini, meanwhile, won with their 161. Ben Tiu and Bayani Tan finished nine points behind at 152.

Fernando beats Ugarte in Cebu

CEBU—Anthony Fernando scored only an 82 but still edged Keenan Ugarte for the 15-16 years class, leading the Visayas qualifiers for the 2001 National age-group golf championship at the Cebu Country Club course here.

Fernando's 156 aggregate gave him a one-stroke victory over Ugarte who fell short of pulling off a big turnaround after carding an 80 in the 36-hole event sponsored by Tesuo Ochia to select Visayas bets to the National finals late this month.

The other qualifiers in the event conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines are Anya Tanpinco, Justin Limjap, Jared Sanson, Charles Hong, James Ugarte, Jyra Wong, Edsel Tan and Mia Piccio.

Tanpinco shot 82-76 to clinch the slot in the girls division; Limjap had 163 to nip Sanson by six in the 13-14 age-group; Hong won over Ugarte in the 11-2 class with his 160 total and Tan beat Piccio by five strokes in the 10-under group.

The qualifying series resumes on April 10-11 with the holding of the Luzon qualifier at the Mimosa-CDC in Angeles.

Asia Pacific golf

THE Asia Pacific Presidential Conference opens with a golf tournament at Manila golf on Friday, April 6. Registration start at 7:00 a.m. Tee-off time start at 8:00-10:00 a.m. only. Limited slot of 80 Rotarians golfers expected. Among Rotary clubs entries are Rotary Club of Carmona-Cavite, Rotary Club of Bagumbayan-Manila, Rotary Club of Makati West, Rotary Club Makati South West, Rotary Club of Paseo de Roxas, Rotary Club of Pasay, Rotary Club of Pasay Mia. Game format is modified blind calaway.

CAP-Forest Hills Open on tomorrow

THE MEN on tour need physical and mental skills when they tackle another picturesque course carved out of a mountain ridge for the College Assurance Plan-Forest Hills Golf Classic starting tomorrow.

Aside from walking almost the entire 6,950-yard length of the up-and-down Forest Hills Golf Club course, the pros will need all the tricks in their bag to survive the demanding conditions of the hazard-laden, par-71 layout.

Hosting its first-ever major championship since it opened, Forest Hills will unveil its unique challenge to the country's grizzled pros: a bunker in the middle of the 18th green.

The course is laden with hazards as the legendary Jack Nicklaus built Forest Hills to put the mental abilities of even the most discriminating golfer to the hilt.

"There is so little room for error at Forest Hills that each player needs to carefully plan and execute each shot," said Philippine Tour chair Bob Sobrepeña.

The previous legs of the Tour saw Rey Pagunsan win at Southwoods, Richard Sinfuego at Camp John Hay and Tony Lascuna at Sherwood Hills.

Another P700,000 was staked by title sponsor College Assurance Plan.

The other presentors are the Fil-Estate Group of Companies, Camp John Hay Dev't. Corp. and Metro Rail Transit.

Also, GM Automobiles Phils. through its president-GM Harold K.J. Coh, has staked a 2001 Chevrolet Cassia as a hole-in-one prize on the 15th hole on the first day of the pro-am tomorrow.

Also playing are aside from Lascuna and Sinfuego Rick Gibson, Cassius Casas, Rodrigo Cuello and Danny Zarate.

The CAP Seniors Challenge, the side-event for seniors, will be played on Saturday and Sunday.

Shark captures 3rd win

STANDINGS	W	L
Shark	3	0
GIV Soap	2	0
Ateneo	1	0
Ana Freezer	1	1
Hapee	1	1
Montaña	1	1
Welcoat	0	2
Osaka	0	2
PharmaQuick	0	2

By Dennis U. Eroa

CHALLENGE Cup champion Shark Energy Drink recovered from an early case of jitters to subdue PharmaQuick, 63-57, and keep the solo leadership in the PBL Chairman's Cup last night at the Makati Coliseum.

Bewildered at the start by the long reach of MBA and national team standout Omanzie Rodriguez, Shark's Chester Tolomia and Gilbert Malabanan recovered their bearings in the fourth period as the Power Boosters stretched their winning record to three games.

Earlier, GIV Beauty Soap used the zone defense in sending Osaka Iridology to the cellar with a 77-69 victory.

Formerly Blu Sun Power, GIV seized solo second with its second straight win. Osaka joined defending champion Welcoat and PharmaQuick at the bottom of the nine-team field with two straight losses.

"I was already looking for Roger (Yap) to give us the firepower," said Shark mentor Leo Austria.

Yap, Shark's main man last conference, watched the game from the gallery. He has joined the PBA's Purefoods.

Austria said PharmaQuick gave Shark tremendous trouble.

"Some of my players were awed by the presence of Bruce (Dacia) and Omanzie (Rodriguez). I told them repeatedly during the halftime break not to be afraid," said Austria.

The 6-foot-3 Dacia debuted in style as he poured in 11 points in the first 20 minutes. The 6-foot-6 Rodriguez blunted Shark's inside game in the early goings.

Both however wilted in the homestretch. Rodriguez had earlier played for the RP team in the ongoing SEABA championship at the Rizal Coliseum.

Tolomia triggered Shark's breakaway with a two-hand slam in the fourth-quarter. He was joined in that uprising by Malabanan, Rysal Castro and speedy Warren Ybañez as Shone took the lead for good, 50-46.

PharmaQuick last threatened at 57-59, 49 seconds remaining, but Tolomia came to the rescue with two gift shots. He next blocked Jun Canoneo, leading to a charity split by Castro, 62-57, 22 seconds remaining.

The absence of swingman Alvin Castro took its toll on Osaka, which failed to crack GIV's zone defense in the fourth quarter. Castro was nursing a sprain.

SCORES
(First Game)
GIV 77—Legaspi 17, Bacani 17, De la Cuesta 14, Billones 14, Sanz 13, Gumatay 2, Kalaw 0, Epondulan 0, Prior 0
OSAKA 69—Asmad 13, Wilson 13, Omolon 11, Ramos 11, Franco 5, Sta Maria 4, Magsumbol 4, Cuan 4.
Quarters:23-25,40-38,60-59,77-69
(Second Game)
SHARK 63—Tolomia 18, Castro 17, Malabanan 9, Ybañez 8, Ortega 4, Robinson 3, Sotto 2, Caceres 2, Basilides 0, Salvador 0, Rodriguez 0.
PHARMAQUICK 57—Avenido 18, Dacia 13, Canoneo 13, Rodriguez 6, Lapinid 3, Altad 2, Lim 2, Velez 0, Jabar 0, Lanete 0.
Quarters:18-11,29-32,48-46,63-57

Garcia, Marave to clash again

JESS Garcia of Kart I and Pepon Marave of Demvel's Enterprises renew their rivalry in the centerpiece Formula Super A category in the third leg of the Shell Super Karting Championships at the Carmona Racing Circuit in Cavite on Sunday, April 8.

Garcia ruled the kickoff leg last March 4, while Marave dominated the second leg last March 18 to take the headstart in this annual series organized by the Carmona Circuit Phils. and sponsored by Shell, Bridgestone, Nokia, Match Box/Hot Wheels, Coca-Cola, Eastway Racing and Demvel's.

Also expected to see action are Jess Cabalinan, Mon Tanjuatco and Manuel Mayo.

"I expect another tight battle this weekend," said Marave, who will carry the banner for his team Demvel's Enterprises in the equally-exciting team competition.

Two other Demvel's karters—Victor Yap and Tyson Sy—will seek their third straight victory in the FSL Heavy and Jr. Kt categories.

Filipinos lose in Mitsubishi Lancer tennis

FILIPINO bets made an early exit yesterday in the boys' singles of the 12th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial tennis Center.

Wild cards Joseph Victorino, Johan Guba, John Rey Moreno and Ian de Guzman put up a gallant stand but were simply outclassed by their foreign rivals.

Victorino, fresh from the ITF Junior Circuit held in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, bowed to world's No. 70 and fourth seed Sanil Kumar Sipaeya of India, 4-6, 2-6.

Guba succumbed to second seed American Prakash Amritraj, 1-6, 0-6; Moreno lost to Jan Stancik of Slovak Republic, 3-6, 0-6 and De Guzman fell to Luka Gregorc of Slovenia Republic, 0-6, 0-6.

Seeded players Christian Johansson of Sweden, Jacob Olsen of New Zealand and Chris Kwon of the United States also ended their campaign in the 21-nation tournament sponsored by Adidas, Universal Robina Corp., Gatorade, Viva Mineral Water, Manila Midtown Hotel, Wilson balls and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Jr netfest in Baguio April 9-11

BAGUIO CITY will host once more the Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Burnham Park Tennis Club on April 9-11.

Featured age groups are the boys' and girls' 18-under, 16-under, 14-under, 12-under and the unisex 10-under divisions in the Milo netfest organized by the Children's Tennis Workshop and supported by official outfitter Adidas.

The nationwide Milo junior tennis development program also visits the Bontoc Tennis Club up in the Mountain Province for the first time in coordination with officers Alfredo Tabtab and Arvin Dugay, while the Baguio tournament is being organized with help from club president Camilo Dugayen.

The Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop swings back to the Northern Luzon regions after a successful staging at the Zamboanga City Lawn Tennis Association for Mindanao.

Don't let up now

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

BECAUSE they have trained too hard and traveled too far, not to mention that their benefactors have invested too much on them, Filipino boxers are especially expected to do a good job and restore their place in international boxing.

"Don't let up now," said a boxing diehard to members of the Philippine team that is competing in three world-class tournaments in Cuba as part of their tuneup for the SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur this September. "Not much has gone right for us over the past many years. And we still remember that shocking medal shutout at the 2000 Sydney Games. It's time to bounce back from those setbacks."

In the coming SEA Games, eight toughened boxers, three of them veterans of the Sydney Olympics, are spearheading the Philippine campaign. The Olympians are light flyweight Danilo Lerio, his brother, bantamweight Arlan, who won a silver medal at the 1999 SEA Games held in Brunei; and light welterweight Romeo Brin, one of two boxing gold medal winners in Brunei. The other members of the team are flyweight Violito Reyla, featherweight Ramil Zambales, lightweight Joel Barriga, battle-scarred welterweight Reynaldo Garido and light middleweight Junie Tizon, who bagged a bronze in Brunei.

"These boxers are among the best at present," said amateur boxing chief Manny Lopez. "And their participation in these tournaments in Cuba, the world's hotbed of amateur boxing, will certainly help us decide the final composition of the national team in the SEA Games."

Lopez heads the delegation to Cuba is also composed of head coach Gregorio Caliwan, who replaced the disgraced Cuban mentor Raul Liranza; Nolito Velasco, Alex Arroyo and referee/judge Jesus San Esteban, Jr.

"I'm really happy and proud of this great team," said former Manila Mayor Mel Lopez and past president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines. "For sure, the boxers will not be a profound disappointment to their benefactors."

The Cuban stint will be the second international trip this year for the national pool after the Fujian Friendship Games held in February in China, where the Filipinos finished first, winning three golds, a silver and a bronze. Also on tap are appearances in the Acropolis Championships in Greece and the World Championships in Ireland and other Asian tournaments before embarking on the final journey to SEA Games in Malaysia.

* * *

CONGRATS, DANCE ATHLETES. I am extending my warmest congratulations to the Filipino dance athletes who did the country proud in the recent International Open Dance Sports Championships held in Singapore. And take a bow, too, Becky Garcia, the indefatigable president of the Dance Sport Council of the Philippines.

Carrying the national colors with aplomb in the dancefest were teenagers John Errolle Melencio and Krystel Dame Tadeo (gold medal, Close Asia, junior Latin and Class D); veteran internationalists Edgar Borromeo and Ana Dulce Yango (gold, Close Asia, amateur standard); Jerswin Poloyapoy and Anne Poloyapoy (silver, Close Asia, amateur standard); Bong Marquez and Edna Ledesma (silver, Close Asia, amateur Latin); and Reynier Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio (4th place, junior Latin category.)

CHAMPION JOKER
Twelve-year-old Joker A. Arroyo, named after her father, clears the bar with her horse, Claudia, to win the crown in the Class D Equestrian division in the grand finals recently of the National Rider of the Year series at the Rizal Park.

Adelaide to host women's world cup

ADELAIDE—Adelaide will host the $US1 million ($A2.1 million) 2001 Women's World Cup of Golf. The event was confirmed today in a statement from sports management group IMG and the South Australian government. Run as a joint venture by IMG and Malaysian group Country Heights Holdings Berhad, the tournament will be staged from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2. It will be televised nationally and throughout Asia, Europe, Japan and the United States.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▨ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Woods claims early victim

AUGUSTA, Georgia—Tiger Woods claimed an early victim three days before opening his campaign to reclaim the Masters title and become the first man to win each of the four majors in a row. Striding out of the clubhouse on the way to his first practice session on Monday, Woods smiled as he watched a television cameraman backing off frantically to get the great man in focus. "Duck, duck," Woods called out, too late to stop the cameraman crashing backward into a low branch on the ancient oak tree standing in front the clubhouse.

SEABA CAGEFEST

RP routs Vietnam, enters semifinals

Team Standings

Group A	W	L
Philippines	2	0
Singapore	1	1
Malaysia	1	1
Vietnam	0	2

Group B	W	L
Thailand	1	0
Brunei	0	1
Indonesia	x	x

Games Today (Rizal Memorial Coliseum)
1:30 p.m.—Brunei vs Indonesia (Group B)
3:30 p.m.—Philippines vs Malaysia (Group A)

BY ROY LUARCA

JUST how tough the Philippine men's team is was shown yesterday when it held Vietnam scoreless in the third quarter en route to a 130-46 victory in the 4th South East Asia Basketball Association men's championship at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Rattling the Vietnamese with a suffocating full court trap, the Filipinos blanked their rivals while coming through with 37 well-distributed points to tally their second straight victory and claim the first semis slot in Group A of the seven-team field.

The Filipinos, composed of stalwarts from the Metropolitan Basketball Association, hinted of things to come when they stormed to a 42-10 bulge after the first quarter.

Seizing the opportunity to utilize the full depth of his bench, RP Team coach Boyzie Zamar shuffled his men from time to time and even had a platoon substitution starting the second quarter.

"I have 12 superstars out there and it wasn't much of a game, so I let them (players) be," said Zamar in Tagalog.

Resorting to a free-wheeling offense, seven Nationals tallied twin digits with Ferriols coming through with 18 points on top of 12 rebounds.

The Nationals were unforgiving in their defense.

Pressing the Vietnamese ball carriers without letup, the Nationals came through with 17 steals and interceptions even as John Ferriols and Romel Adducul ruled the shaded lane for a 44-16 edge in rebounds.

The Philippines' 84-point margin eclipsed Thailand's 64-point edge over Brunei (101-37) in the Group B inaugural on Monday.

Singapore stunned Malaysia, 80-55, earlier and tied its victim at 1-1 in Group A. Vietnam bowed out of contention at 0-2.

The tournament, which will select the region's two representatives to the Asian Basketball Confederation men's championship, is sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Casino Filipino, Molten, Bestank, Rain Forest Mineral Water, Absolute Distilled Water, Baker's Fair and Orchid Garden Suites.

Scores:

PHILIPPINES 130—Ferriols 18, Adducul 17, Laure 16, Dela Rosa 14, Se 12, Calaguio 11, Martin 10, Mendiola 9, Rodriguez 8, Victolero 7, Padilla 6, Echavez 2.

VIETNAM 46—Voung 9, Bui 8, Quach 5, Ly 5, Huynh 5, To 4, Pham 3, Nguyen 3, Le 2, Trinh 2, Tiep 0, Pham DN 0, Le HH 0.

Halftime: 72-31.

MBA dares PBA to a '₱5-M bet'

THIS IS what MBA officials have in mind when they hatched a proposal to pit the Philippine men's team against the best the PBA has to offer on Monday night.

"Why not? It would be a fans' dream and to top it all the money would go to charity," said Ramon Tuason, the MBA director for business development.

Tuason said the best-of-three series with either the All-Filipino champion or a PBA selection could satisfy the fans' curiosity as to how the stars of both leagues would fare against each other.

"If you're a basketball fan, will you not want to see the best that local basketball has to offer?" said Tuason. "For another, the proceeds will go to a noble cause."

The series, if ever it materializes, will also serve as tune-up games for the RP Team honing up for its defense of the Kuala Lumpur Southeast Asian Games men's basketball crown in September.

Ben Solon, team owner of the Socsargen Marlins, agreed with the proposal and said his fellow team owners were likely to support it because many people would benefit. Also around was Dino Araneta, co-owner of the LBC-Batangas Blades.

Under the plan, Tuason said the games could be held in Cebu, Negros and Manila in that order. Tuason said he wanted the MBA rules applied.

"I believe that the television earnings and gate receipts for the series will generate as much as P5 million," said Tuason. *Roy Luarca*

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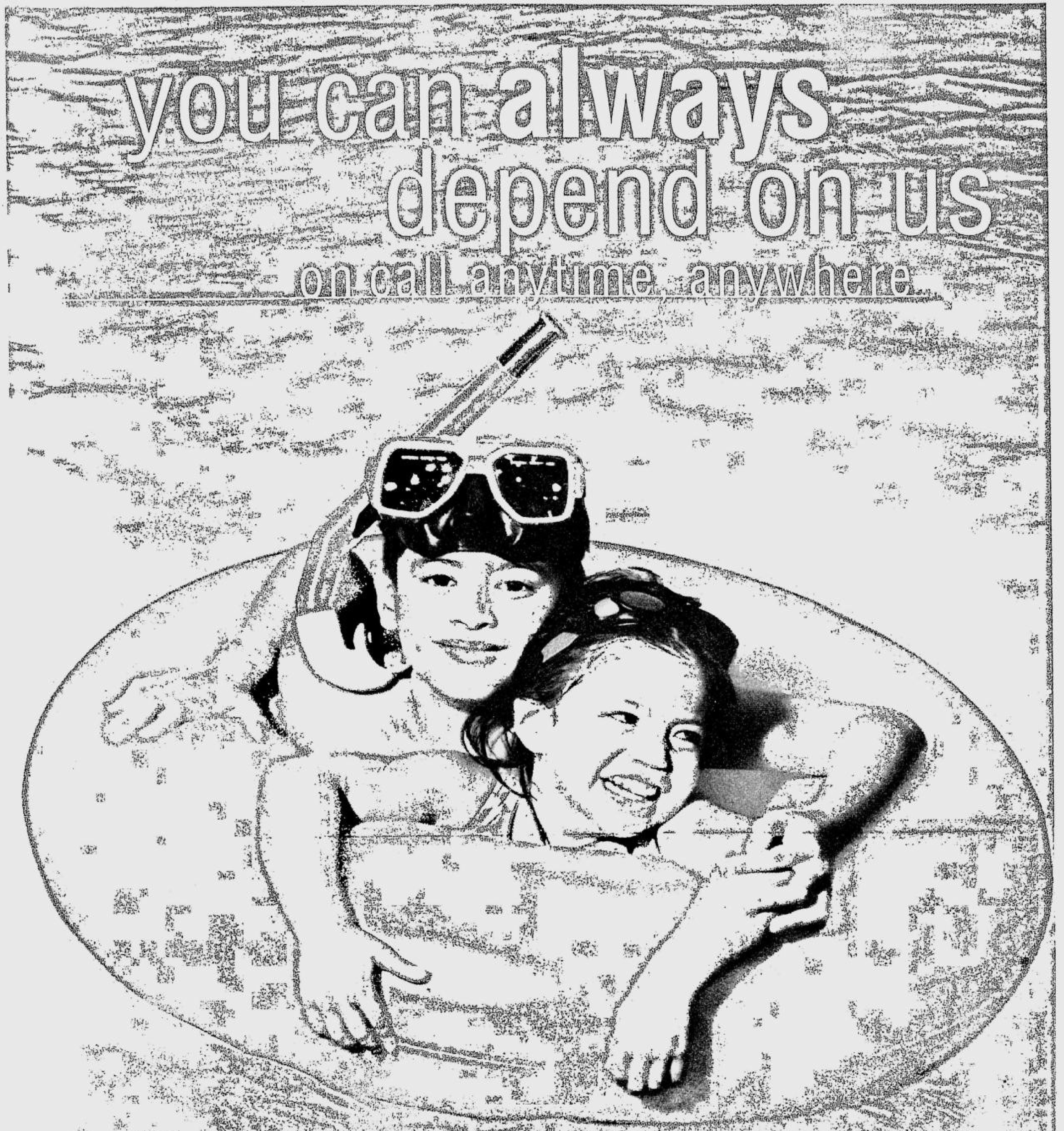

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LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

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4 MEN/ A24

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Wazzzzup?

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AudioTorium 23 West Ave. Quezon City	REPLAY BAND	RETRO NIGHT 74.2330 / 373.5574
Acoustics & Billiards Bugsy Basement #208 Tomas Morato	ROLAND	D' ONLY BILLIARD & MUSIC HALL IN Q.C.
BUMA Grill & Bar 9595 Kamagong St. Makati	SUGARSPICE	6-9 PM P 35 BIT BEERS 896.2116/896.6554
Cowboy Grill Brgy Almanza, Las Piñas	SERSIDE EZEKIEL	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎ 801.7644
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Cowboy Grill Novaliches Q.C.	MAEGAN AGUILAR SWEETBLOOD/FAT 16	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎ 936.9757
KAMPO 2088 #47 West Avenue Q. C.	MAGIC TOUCH BIG DEAL/EDGE	PAROKYA NI EDGAR APRIL 6, FRIDAY
Examiner's Lite n' Live #52 Examiner St. Q.C.	PARLIAMENT X-PROJECT	P 150 CONSUMABLE ☎ 415.3196
Music Warehouse Infront of Quiapo Central	ELEMENTS OF STYLE RIDGE	SUMMER BAND FEST P 75 CONSUMABLE
Padis Point Manila	7 SECONDS	NO ENTRANCE FEE 527.6180/527.6211
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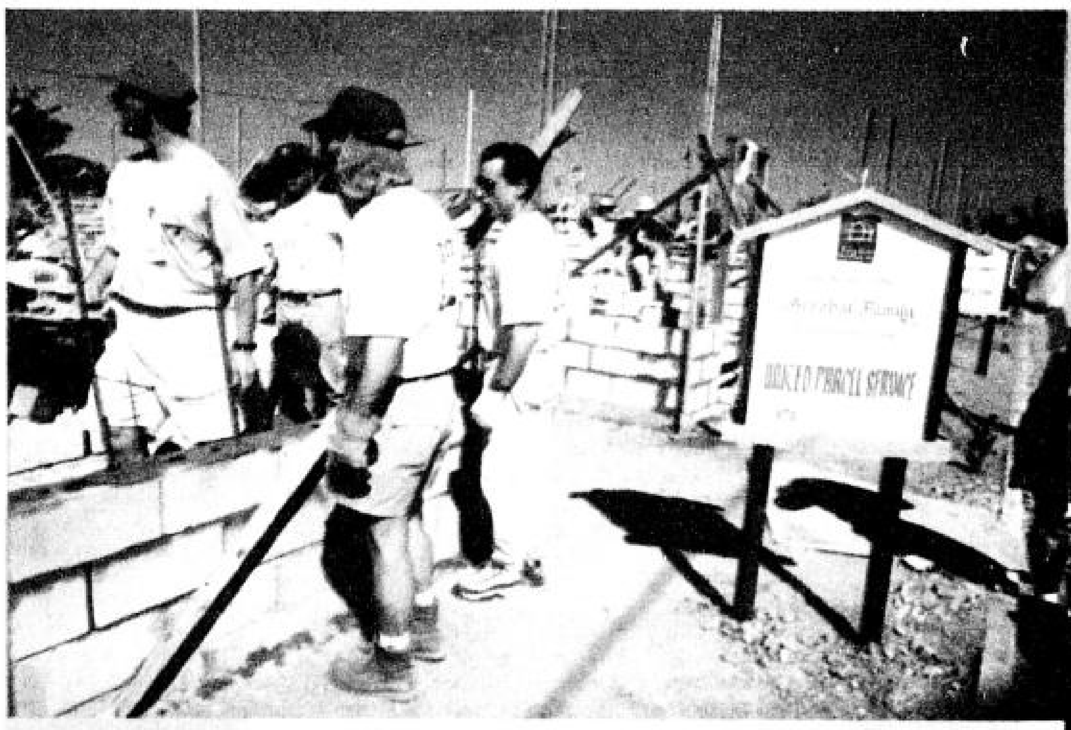
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4 912-8983



ABS-CBN
BANTAY BATA 163
ABS-CBN Foundation, Inc.

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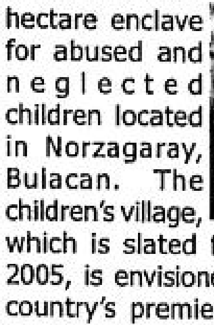

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As of last count, more than 35,000 UPS employees have given their time and support to non-profit organizations all over the world. And UPS employees have not only built homes and helped save lives, many have lived and eaten with the people they've sought to help themselves. In fact, UPS' philanthropic efforts, says Evern Cooper, executive director of The UPS Foundation, mirror's the company's core values. Indeed, when you look at it closely, UPS' socio-civic efforts are a reflection of its operational policies – both are prudent, studied, efficient and effective. In fact, a UPS' philanthropic efforts can be summed up in two words, Cooper adds, "quietly and consistently." Just like the way it delivers packages.

In the case of Beatriz Arzobal and many others, UPS brought home more than just packages.

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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

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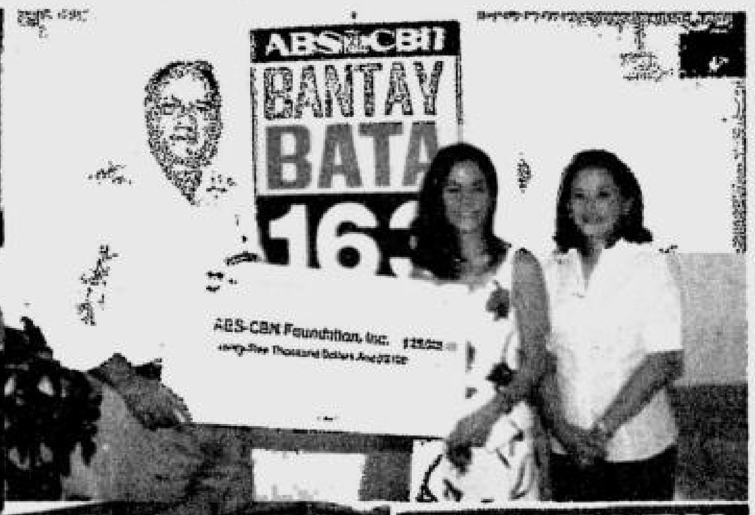

ABS-CBN
BANTAY
BATA
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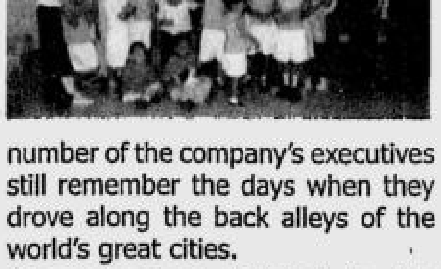

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For its part, The UPS Foundation by itself can boast of helping over 45,000 people increase literacy and gain sorely needed skills. Founded in 1951, The UPS Foundation provides support to community programs such as housing, literacy, youth development, and food distribution. More importantly perhaps, the foundation has been integral in realizing the company's mission of fostering volunteerism among its employees.

Quietly and Consistently

As of last count, more than 35,000 UPS employees have given their time and support to non-profit organizations all over the world. And UPS employees have not only built homes and helped save lives, many have lived and eaten with the people they've sought to help themselves. In fact, UPS' philanthropic efforts, says Evern Cooper, executive director of The UPS Foundation, mirror's the company's core values. Indeed, when you look at it closely, UPS' socio-civic efforts are a reflection of its operational policies – both are prudent, studied, efficient and effective. In fact, a UPS' philanthropic efforts can be summed up in two words, Cooper adds, "quietly and consistently." Just like the way it delivers packages.

In the case of Beatriz Arzobal and many others, UPS brought home more than just packages.

‘Death zone’ in Erap City

By Agnes Donato

“THIS IS practically a death zone. People are dying of starvation, joblessness and lack of health services.”

This was how one urban poor advocate described living conditions in the much-touted Erap City in Montalban, Rizal, where at least 16 people have died.

Vangie Pangilinan, head of KVI Action Group, said people, especially children, in Kasiglahan Village, Erap City, have been dying because of lack of basic services and utilities in the area.

The urban poor group also urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the P2.1-billion budget of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission, claiming millions of pesos might have been wasted on housing projects that were not even livable.

Members of the KVI Action Group said the poor living conditions in Kasiglahan Village, where they are based, only proved the PRRC had not been using its funds properly.

Pangilinan pointed out there was not even a lying-in clinic in the area. “Only a midwife stays in a so-called health center that does not even have medicine,” Pangilinan said.

She said the P2.1-billion fund was part of the P7.9-billion loan, which the Asian Development Bank extended to government to assist in the river’s rehabilitation.

Based on records of the Urban Poor Associates, a group helping out families evicted from settlements lining the Pasig River, at least 16 people, 9 of whom were children, have died in Kasiglahan Village because of lack of medical care.

“The people here are so poor they can’t even bury their dead properly,” Pangilinan said.

She cited the case of a certain Francisco Mingote, whose wake lasted for a month because his family could not afford funeral costs.

The latest fatality, she added, was a seven-month-old baby who died of measles.

“The truth remains that we were removed from the danger zone that is the Pasig riverbank, only to be relocated to a death zone that is Erap City,” Pangilinan said.

The Kasiglahan Village is part of the 2,500-hectare Erap City, which was touted by the Home Insurance Guarantee Corp. as “the first-ever well-planned socialized housing project undertaken in the country.”

Defense chief to name new traffic official

By Agnes E. Donato

REYES

ABALOS

ANOTHER official will be assigned to the Traffic Enforcement Group.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes agreed to assign another official to improve the traffic situation in the metropolis and rid its streets of extortionists in uniform, according to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair Benjamin Abalos Jr.

Abalos earlier complained about the poor performance of traffic policemen and cited reports reaching his office that said almost 85 percent of the traffic enforcers engaged in extortion.

“I already talked to (Defense Secretary Angelo) Reyes about this,” Abalos said. “I said the MMDA needed someone strong-willed enough to curb this bad practice (extortion) of our traffic men.”

He said Reyes promised to send someone to help out Supt. Vicente Raval in the Traffic Enforcement Group.

Raval was tapped a few months back to put the traffic management under one command.

But Abalos said the traffic problem has become unbearable. He cited problems like the proliferation of illegal bus and jeepney terminals, ambulant vendors and service shops on major thoroughfares.

He warned the so-called “*kotong* cops” that it would be easier to have them jailed, now that the MMDA has fiscals from the Department of Justice.

“Once they are caught, they will be facing not only administrative but criminal charges,” Abalos stressed.

The justice department recently assigned special prosecutors to go after scalawags in uniform.

Abalos also called on extortion victims to personally complain to and cooperate with the agency so that necessary action will be taken.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, April 4, 2001
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95
Gospel: Jn 8:31-42

Jesus went on to say to the Jews who believed in him: “You will be my true disciples if you keep my word. Then you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.” They answered him, “We are the descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves of anyone. What do you mean by saying: You will be free?”

Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave. But the slave doesn’t stay in the house forever; the son stays forever. So, if the Son makes you free, you will be really free.

I know that you are the descendants of Abraham; yet you want to kill me because my word finds no place in you. For my part I speak of what I have seen in the Father’s presence, but you do what you have learned from your father.”

They answered him, “Our father is Abraham.” Then Jesus said, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do as Abraham did. But now you want to kill me, the one who tells you the truth – the truth that I have learned from God. That is not what Abraham did; what you are doing are the works of your father.”

The Jews said to him, “We are not illegitimate children; we have one Father, God.” Jesus replied, “If God were your Father you would love me, for I came forth from God, and I am here. And I didn’t come by my own decision, but it was he himself who sent me.”

Commentary

Jesus addressed these words to the Jews who believed but had not realized the implications of such faith. They believed according to their own terms and not according to the terms of Jesus. That is why, there was really no faith in him. They had not even started to abide in his word. And so, they could not be taught by him; i.e., be his disciples, doing the truth and thus having the freedom of one begotten by God through faith. Instead, they were committing the sin; namely, not believing in Jesus, the sign of God’s unconditional love for all, irrespective of Abrahamic descent by flesh. Consequently, such believers were true slaves, carried away simply by prejudices and false assumptions. Is your faith in a doctrine or in the person of Jesus, sent by the Most High God? Or do you make your own conditions to believe in him, in God?

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (CRIMES AGAINST CHASTITY)—Qualified rape— Section 335 of the Revised Penal Code, as amended by Section 11 of R.A. No. 7659, penalizes rape of a minor daughter by her father as qualified rape and a heinous crime. In proving such felony, the prosecution must allege and prove the elements of rape: (1) sexual congress; (2) with woman; (3) by force or without her consent and, in order to warrant the imposition of capital punishment, the additional elements that: (4) the victim is under 18 years of age at the time of the rape and (5) the offender is a parent of the victim. In this case, it was sufficiently alleged and proved that the offender was the victim’s father. But the victim’s age was not properly and sufficiently proved beyond reasonable doubt. [Citations omitted.] [*En Banc*, Justice Quisumbing, People v. Tundag, G.R. Nos. 135695-96, October 12, 2000]

Digest by R.B. Vera

Mob kills wrong man

By Jerome Aning

A YOUNG man who was just strolling in Tondo, Manila was lynched by his own neighbors who mistook him for one of three men who robbed a taxi driver before dawn yesterday.

Police identified the victim as Arnold Bacu, 25, a resident of Area A, Parola Compound, Tondo.

Police said Bacu died on the spot due to head injuries and other wounds he sustained in the lynching.

One of the three suspects, Rodelio Fortaleza, 22, married and a resident of Purok 3, Isla Puting Bato, Tondo, is confined at the Gat Andres Bonifacio Memorial Hospital after he was also caught and beaten by the crowd.

The taxi driver, Nelson Caspe, 31, told PO3 Rodelio Lingcong of the Western Police District homicide section that he was held up by Fortaleza and two other men around 12:30 a.m. at Area A, in Parola.

Caspe said his passengers flagged down his cab about midnight on Araneta Avenue in Quezon City and asked him to bring them to Pier 2 at the Manila North Harbor.

The driver said the three men pulled out knives and told him to turn over to them his earnings, but he braked to a stop, jumped out of the cab and shouted for help.

The three men ran to a dark alley, pursued by about 50 residents, some of them carrying wooden clubs. Two of the holdup men managed to escape but the crowd found Fortaleza hiding in an outdoor toilet, and beat him black and blue.

PO3 Lingcong said the crowd mistook Bacu, who was reportedly taking a stroll, for one of the suspects.

After the commotion, Bacu lay on the ground, bleeding from a gash on the head.

Caspe later confirmed that Bacu was not one of the men who held him up.

RP basketball caught in a museum

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THE PHILIPPINES is setting a world record with the current staging of the Southeast Asia Basketball Association (Seaba) championship. It’s the only international tournament being played inside an over-qualified museum.

No offense meant for the local amateur basketball hierarchy headed by my friend Tiny Literal. I knew they had wanted to conduct the Seaba tilt inside a modern, air-conditioned venue, under more merciful conditions. But the group had obviously been left with no choice.

Mr. Literal & Co. ended up literally sweating it out inside a certified sweatshop because, you guessed it, of that very dirty game called sports politics.

* * *

Take it from one who had shot a few baskets inside the Rizal Memorial Stadium when his knees were younger, more obedient. The airless venue is not for the weak of heart.

So, with the boiling per-foot pressure inside the old stadium, it’s easy to say that, other than Seaba cage supremacy, the participants could also be involved in an endurance contest of sorts.

You can bet that by the time the tournament is over, the players would have shed more than their share of unnecessary poundage.

For your information, the RMC, where I had the luck of having witnessed the epic exploits of Carlos Loyzaga, Carlos Badion, Loretto Carbonnel and then Ciso Bernardo and Ed Ocampo a little later, was built ages ago, in 1934 to be exact.

In short, it has not only outdated itself as a decent venue for international events. It should have been converted into a sports museum, to honestly serve its purpose, a long time ago.

* * *

Of course, the Rizal Coliseum has undergone numberless repairs and renovations.

But a perspiring first-hand account by Tempo sports editor Rudy Navarro bore out my initial fears. Big sums were spent but nothing sane has been done to check or cure its sick, pre-war ventilation system.

As a result, Rudy N., no stranger to tight, sweaty situations, had to bid Go Teng Kok goodbye only after a few minutes on Monday when the Rizal Memorial Oven predictably boiled just in time for the summer afternoon opening rites.

Actually, the Philippine Sports Commission could have done right if it had offered to stage the Seaba meet in the nearby Ninoy Aquino Stadium, whose repeatedly repaired aircon system, we trust, was operating.

We were, however, told that the Ninoy Aquino Stadium, readily renovated to the tune of P43 million after only a few months of use in 1986, was again, my God, being renovated.

* * *

You see, it’s horrible and sickening enough that, all of a sudden, city streets are being dug left and right in time for the May elections. It’s easy to believe what everybody else suspects that these wanton road repairs were meant to provide campaign funds for incumbent local candidates.

But must this national malady spread over to our sports fields, particularly the RMSC where top officials are involved in an endless race to repair and reconstruct the various facilities?

The Rizal Memorial Stadium, if it has to live up to the name of the man it supposedly honors, should have been retired at least twice over.

It is, after all, more known as the original mecca of Philippine basketball, where some of the brightest moments in national caging had sparkled.

* * *

Well, knowing the president of the Basketball Association of the Philippine, Tiny Literal, he would have opted for the finest venue, either the Araneta Coliseum or the Philsports in Pasig.

With what’s now going on at the Rizal stadium, our Southeast Asian neighbors can only be expected to suspect that Erap Estrada had indeed robbed the country blind for them to be left competing inside a haunted house.

As for the tournament proper, it would be a major shocker if the Philippine team suffers an upset and loses its Seaba crown.

You can bet your summer *halo-halo* and watermelon budget that the RP. squad, represented here by standouts from the Metropolitan Basketball Association, would barely be threatened in its crown-retention drive.

There’s a big danger, though. With the expected victory, our basketball officials, together with the gullible local crowds, could end up swearing and believing that, suddenly, our basketball program is well in place.

Please don’t buy that.

* * *

With the country’s rich basketball heritage, another Seaba crown is no extraordinary dish.

For the new BAP leadership to be truly legit and effective, it’s expected to junk the mediocre. It must start thinking big.

A solid program, centering on modern basics and the restoration of the zone defense in the local pro leagues, should be put into motion.

We should not allow ourselves to be deluded into believing that the Seaba crown is the real thing. No, please.

Tiny Literal can help win back the Asian crown only if he plays his cards right and forgets about dirty politics.

It’s about time we junked the hackneyed, very limited individualistic Filipino style of play which, although it had won regional crowns in the past, should have long been deposited in a museum.

Unfortunately, this tested losing style of our slow, over-fed superstars continues to earn plaudits in newer, air-conditioned venues.

KISS OF LIFE
Members of the Philippine National Red Cross Safety Services use dolls to demonstrate the use of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on babies, during a demonstration at the Maris School in Marikina.
VAL HANDUMON

4 men dumped . . .

(From page A23)

floating in the river three days after he was reported missing.

The Western Police District’s homicide section is having a hard time solving the case because of the absence of witnesses.

Casimiro said the witnesses are among scores of people who belong to the pro-Estrada groups that have been camping out almost daily at the Liwasang Bonifacio in front of the Central Post Office building.

Police said the witnesses, both young men, used to go to the BI building, probably to sleep and relieve themselves.

The younger witness, however, still has to get his parents’ consent to testify, SPO1 Casimiro said.

When asked why the river’s current did not sweep the body downstream, the policeman said that the place where the body was dumped was muddy and shallow.

Police are trying to locate one of the dismissed ROTC officials, Sgt. Genesis Binagatan, whom the UST’s campus paper, The Varsitarian, quoted as having made an indirect threat to Chua and his classmate, Romulo Yumul.

Binagatan reportedly warned the two students that for their expos,, they would experience the wrath of a “pissed-off military man.”

A team from the WPD homicide section went to the address Binagatan submitted to the UST-ROTC office and found it to be fictitious.

Chua and Yumul reportedly received death threats in the course of the ROTC investigation.

Investigators are also trying to confirm the threats on Yumul to establish a possible motive for Chua’s murder.

“(The witnesses) said they didn’t immediately report the body-throwing incident because, according to them, they often see people dumping something into the river,” Casimiro said. “But they do remember the soldier-looking men.”

Clerical error bill signed into law

GOODS news to those who have problems with errors in their birth certificates.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has signed into law the Clerical Error Bill, now known as Republic Act NO. 9048, which is expected to hasten the process of correction of errors in birth certificates.

Authored by Valenzuela Rep. Magi Gunigundo, the law will enable people to correct in less than three weeks the mistakes in their birth certificates that were committed by employees of the office of the civil registrar.

Before the bill was signed into law, it often took the government at least six months to correct such mistakes, what with the long and arduous bureaucratic procedures, Gunigundo said.

People needed to hire a lawyer to facilitate the correction and have the correction published in a paper of general circulation. A court order was also needed.

“It’s so unfair and unjust,” Gunigundo said.

The new law, however, will focus on the correction of misspelled names, not on the change in gender and other crucial aspects of the birth certificate.

Christian V. Esguerra

Trinidad counts on women

MEMBERS of a women's group urged Pasay City residents to be extra-wise and vigilant in electing candidates in the May 14, 2001 elections.

Mercy Singson, president of Pasayeña, a civic-oriented women's group, and members of her group last Sunday joined a march to encourage city residents to support Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad so that Pasay would have continuity in good governance and progress.

Singson, who also heads the Never Again Movement (NAM), said: "Never again will Pasayeños allow the city to be denied of development."

She noted in the past 40 years, Pasay City was always known as the "Sin City" of the Philippines. It was only a year ago when that title started to be erased, she said, citing moral development programs launched by Trinidad.

Lawyer Jovy Angel, lawyer of NAM, echoed Singson's concern, saying that Pasay residents must not be swayed by media publicity implemented by some politicians.

"These candidates resort to publicity because they only want to be read and heard," Angel said. "But I doubt if they have a platform or a comprehensive plan."

Angel cited Trinidad's record in tax collection for 2000-2001, which the lawyer said spoke of better governance compared to the past three administrations of former mayors Pablo Cuneta, Eduardo Calixto and Jovito Claudio.

Trinidad is running under the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino banner with running mate Tony Calixto and Rep. Ding Briones.

Alcera vows to effect changes

PASAY City mayoral candidate Greg Alcera has assured his constituents that there would be a "crossroad of transformation" in the city's politics after the May elections.

Alcera said this during the proclamation rally of the Lakas-NUCD-UMDP at the Star City Amusement Park.

"There is no greater force than an idea whose time has come," said Alcera, 41, the incumbent vice mayor.

He said the transformation would bring Pasay voters a new generation of public servants who have a sense of commitment.

Speaking before more than 20,000 supporters at the Star City Amusement Park, Alcera said, "We must do away with traditional politics, which requires only money, popularity and ability to exploit the dreams of the poor."

He said other politicians do not really intend to address poverty because "the poorer the people, the more they are vulnerable to traditional politicians."

He said his administration would make decent jobs and education available and eradicate corruption.

Alcera said the transformation would start at the Pasay City hall among city hall officials and employees.

Campaign strategy

IF YOU are a candidate in the May 14 elections and you want to reach your constituents, your message has to be delivered in a variety of ways because everyone absorbs information differently. When you talk, the odds are high that less than 20 percent of your audience will remember three-fourths of what you say.

These and many more campaign concerns will be tackled on Friday when the Center for Learning and Teaching Styles (CLTS) convenes a free half-day session on "What Electoral Candidates Need to Know About Winning Public Support."

The activity will be held at the Penthouse Room of the YMCA International Hostel at 350 Villegas St., Ermita, Manila near SM Manila and Manila City Hall.

CLTS president Henry S. Tenedero said the affair is meant to assist candidates in enhancing their campaign strategies using the scientific yet very practical learning styles approach.

Interested parties should call 374-4967 and look for Vir to make a reservation.

Asistio silence worries opponents

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE UNUSUALLY silent campaign of the Asistio brothers in Caloocan City is making Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo and his allies nervous.

Councilor Edgar Erice yesterday feared the Asistios might sow violence in the coming elections.

"*Delikado ang mga* Asistio *pag tahimik* (The Asistios are deadly when they are silent)," Erice said. "*Hindi natin alam kung ano'ng plano nila. Hindi natin alam baka magkaroon ng dugo sa kampanya* (We don't know what they're up to. We fear bloodshed may mar this campaign)."

The councilor is up against Macario "Boy" Asistio Jr. for the congressional seat of Caloocan's second district.

Erice also expressed concern over the seemingly halfhearted campaign the Asistios are waging thus far.

Macario and his equally controversial brother, Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio, seemed to be content with the few uninteresting two-color posters set on graffiti-strewn walls.

Also, the Asistios' "motorcade" which went around the city, consisted of a group of worn-out owner-type jeeps bearing huge pictures of the brothers.

The campaign of Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo's ticket, on the other hand, is anything but lethargic. Colorful floats on pick-up trucks, with upbeat campaign jingles blaring out of loudspeakers, have taken the city by storm.

Erice summed up the Asistios' campaign this way: "It's either the Asistio dynasty is dead, or the brothers are planning to sow terror in the elections."

"I've received intelligence reports that Baby could be planning to have me assassinated."

Baby Asistio, who is facing Malonzo in the mayoral race, laughed off Erice's speculations.

"*Hindi ko na pinapatulan 'yang si* Erice; *ang totoo, inaalagaan ko pa siya dahil alam kong wala siyang panalo kay* Boy (I don't want to take on Erice anymore; truth is, I am even taking care of him because he doesn't stand a chance against Boy)," Baby said.

"Erice is creating his own ghosts," said Allan Encarnacion, Baby's spokesman. "But he's free to hallucinate. He knows the people won't vote for him because he didn't do anything for six years."

Encarnacion added nobody would ever make an attempt on Erice's life because he is a "nobody in Caloocan."

METRO CAMPAIGN TRAIL

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo raises the hands of Lakas-NUCD-UMDP (Malabon Chapter) candidates led by mayoral candidate Flerida "Flery" Marcelo (third from left) at the Lakas proclamation rally held in Mandaluyong City. Also in photo were (from left to right) Councilors Payapa Ona, Ma. Luisa Villaroel, Malabon-Navotas Rep. Ricky Sandoval, Jun Ong and Indon Cruz (partly hidden).

LANI MERCADO-REVILLA distributes medicines to residents of Bacoor, Cavite. The wife of Cavite Gov. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. is running for mayor of Bacoor.

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza is surrounded by residents of Kagitingan Street in Tondo. Atienza, who stopped his motorcade to meet the residents, is behind the "Buhayin ang Maynila" urban renewal program, which includes Tondo's Plaza Morlones.

Fresnedi hails Muntinlupa scholars

MUNTINLUPA Mayor Jaime Fresnedi personally congratulated the 40 high school students who won scholarships from the Muntinlupa Scholarship Foundation (MSF) when they paid a courtesy call on him at the city hall.

The students who passed MSF's rigorous examination and interview mostly belong to the honor rolls of private and public schools. They bested 93 other finalists citywide.

Fresnedi said the MSF program gives bright students the chance to take up courses in any school they want.

Each scholar will receive P25,000 a semester for four years, as well as book and travelling allowances.

The new scholars are Rizalyn Sajoco, Sheena Anonuevo, Nechie Asilar, Rutchel Cernal, Marvin Manrique, George Bruna, Janina Vasquez, Cristine Asunario, John Paul Presto, Karina Bayona, Jennifer Rosario, Michelle Buga'yon, Marvin Tomandao, Madel Aliguay, Cecilia Labrador, Richelda Boitizon, Miriam Tuibeo, Jane de los Santos; Gerald Magpantay and Katherine Magpayo of the Muntinlupa National High School (MNHS);

Manuel Ofracio, Astred Manansala, Cristine Navarra, Melanie Camalig, and Carlos Cardano Jr. of the Pedro E. Diaz High School; Lailani Abubo, Mina maranan, and Gilbert Yap of the San Roque Catholic School; Daniel Sapungan, Carlo Esguerra, Harris Columa, and Leandro Cartaulin of the Sto. Nino School;

Catherine Nales and Joanne Rodriguez of the Divine Mercy School; Jennifer Tenepre of the Mary Mother of God Parochial School; Rod Vincent Babera of the Mary Cause of Our Joy Parochial School;

Caren Recto of the St. Benedict College; Winston Chicano of the Southernside Montesorri School; and Pychee Tamargo and Karren Basco of the St. Bernadette College of Alabang.

Fresnedi said that after the visit, the scholars attended an orientation session on MSF's rules and regulations.

Earlier, the city government chose 10 winners of the yearly Most Outstanding Students (MOST) of Muntinlupa contest. The winners received scholarships to a four-year course in college, plus transportation allowance.

Social democrats endorse PDSP

SOCIAL democratic sectoral groups are endorsing the Partido Demokratiko-Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP) as their party-list candidate in the May 14, 2001 party-list election.

"We have only one senatorial candidate, Moner Bajunaid, and we are fielding and supporting one party, the PDSP, for party-list," said PDSP secretary general Efren Villaseñor.

In a recent three-day multisectoral conference at the PDSP headquarters in Quezon City, about 50 national multisectoral leaders representing groups of farmers, workers and other sectoral groups and coalitions identified with the social democratic movement agreed not to field individual parties, like they did in 1998.

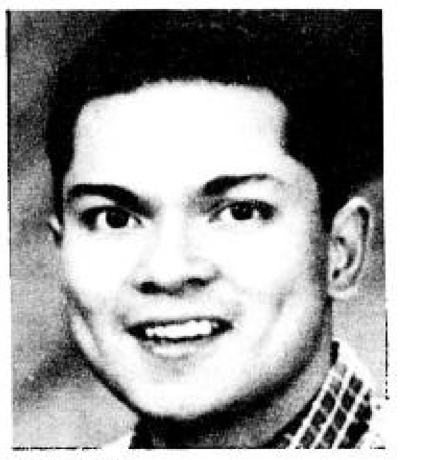
Instead, they committed to pool their resources for the success of the PDSP in the party-list election.

The groups include the basic sectoral parties of the "Group of 38" party-list organizations declared winners by the Commission on Elections in 1998 but which were barred by the Supreme Court from sitting in Congress because of their failure to obtain the mandatory 2-percent vote required by Republic Act No. 7941.

The PDSP also submitted its list of nine nominees: Abdul Aziz Lomondot, Muslim leader representing Mindanao; Elizabeth Angsioco, women's leader representing Luzon; Prudencio Garcia, coconut farmer representing Visayas; Gregorio del Prado, labor leader; Romanito Lozada, urban poor leader; Bernie Austria, youth leader; Eugenio Insigne, indigenous people; Felix De Leon, fishermen's leader; and Ace Mulao, PDSP-youth.

Villasenor, who is also a coconut farmer leader, said the recovery of the coco levy, the peace initiative in Mindanao, agrarian reform, job generation and industrial democracy are the PDSP's priority concerns.

Dayang seeks support for 'moral compass'


DAYANG

JUAN E. Dayang Jr., former chair of the Alliance for Youth Solidarity, urged the youth to support candidates who espouse family values and morals in their campaign.

Dayang, in a conference with youth leaders over the weekend, said the youth should rally behind leaders and candidates who talk about moral values and who serve as a "moral compass for young Filipinos."

"They are leaders we can look up to as a moral compass for our direction and future," he said.

Dayang, a graduate of the International Leadership Program of the United Nations University and of the Graduate Institute of Peace Studies of Kyung Hee University of South Korea, observed that the present political campaign is steeped in high-sounding concerns, hollow promises and showmanship. "Except for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and His Eminence Jaime Cardinal Sin, very few have found time to explain why it is important for the young to succeed in school, why they should not smoke and drink alcohol, and why sexual abstinence is a virtue," Dayang said.

He lamented that not many office-seekers are discussing the need to make sacrifices for long-term goals. "Very few candidates offer a vision for the country they want to lead," he said.

Political leaders should use the observance of the Holy Week as an opportunity for reflection and self-assessment.

"Let us turn to our Maker and contemplate His sacrifices and His blessings," he said. "Indeed, it is a good time to look at ourselves and see if we have been faithful to the teachings of the good book.

"Our faith challenges us to do better, to walk the extra mile, to travel the difficult road to make better men of ourselves."

Exhorting the youth to heed the call of President Macapagal and Cardinal Sin for moral leadership, Dayang added: "The Filipino youth should emulate the moral ascendancy of those young Filipinos at Edsa II."

Belmonte says housing for poor 'a must'

SPEAKER Sonny "SB" Belmonte identified urban housing and land ownership as among his centerpiece programs to lift the quality of life of the poor should he win Quezon city's mayoral contest.

"We will not give up looking for ways and means so that poor families become safe and happy in decent homes they can call their very own," said Belmonte, who was a three-term congressman of the 4th district of Quezon City.

He recalled one incident three years ago which proved his determination to help ease the woes of squatter families. He managed to convince a big landowner to dispose of his land, benefiting members of the Samahan ng mga Ina sa Barangay San Isidro in Galas.

The House leader, who garnered an unprecedented 92 percent votes in his district for his third term as congressman, recalled to residents of Barangay Commonwealth that 150 families living on a one-hectare lot sought his help to convince the owner to sell his land.

Belmonte urged Quezon City residents to support his Serbisyong Bayan (SB) team under the People Power Coalition (PPC), which includes reelectionist Vice Mayor Connie Angeles, four congressional candidates and 24 city council aspirants.

In housing, the programs of Belmonte's Serbisyong Bayan include the functional and viable residence (FVR) condominiums built in the 4th district.

He also assisted residents of Guirayan Street in Barangay Doña Imelda in negotiating for the acquisition of the lot where they built a medium-sized condominium. The residents were able to borrow from the government's Unified Home Lending Program to pay for their units.

Tamayo lauds President for distributing lots

LOCAL leaders of Las Piñas City led by coalition congressional candidate Antonio L. Tamayo recently lauded President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for distributing certificates of lot allocation (CLAs) to more than 8,000 poor residents of Barangay BF/CAA.

Tamayo, who is also the city chair of the Kaibigan ni GMA Movement, said the poor communities in Las Piñas were very happy to receive their CLAs as these would eventually lead to their owning the houses and lots they are presently occupying.

"It's a dream come true for many Las Piñeros," Tamayo said.

"We deeply thank President Macapagal for the fast implementation of social programs," he said. "The decision to distribute authentic certificates of lot allocation to our people within less than 100 days of her presidency is a clear manifestation of her sincerity to alleviate the burden of the poor people not with rhetoric but with positive action."

Tamayo was joined by mayoral candidate Cesar Gonzales, vice mayoral candidate Tirso Cruz III, and local socio-civic leaders in briefing the President on the pressing needs and problems of Las Piñas.

Snatcher shot dead in Munti

A NOTORIOUS snatcher allegedly engaged Muntinlupa police in a running gun battle until he was eventually shot dead on Sunday.

Police identified the alleged snatcher as Danilo Allah of Marquez Street, Northbay, Navotas.

Investigation showed that Ritchie Ramirez was shopping in a flea market in Filinvest, Alabang when Allah grabbed his gold necklace.

Ramirez's cries for help attracted the attention of Police Officers 1 Pedro Delgado and Erwin Pando of the Muntinlupa Police Station 2 who were on foot patrol.

Delgado and Pando ran after Allah. They said Allah drew a .357 caliber pistol and fired at them. They said they fired back with their service firearms, killing Allah on the spot.

Police later found out that Allah had been preying on shoppers in the area. *Alcuin Papa*

Caloocan 'pastor' charged with rape of 2 daughters

By Christian V. Esguerra

A 51-YEAR-OLD man, said to be a pastor of the Methodist Church, has been accused of raping his three daughters, aged 10, 6 and 5, whenever he got drunk.

Police have arrested the man, a resident of Caloocan City, and have filed multiple rape charges against him before the Caloocan prosecutor's office.

Authorities are also set to file separate charges against the suspect for sexually molesting a 3-year-old neighbor in February.

The suspect's younger brother accompanied the victims in filing a complaint with the Women's and Children's Desk of the Caloocan Police.

The brother claimed that the suspect is a Methodist pastor; but church officials denied the suspect was one of its ministers.

PO1 Johanna Lavarias said that since January, whenever the suspect was drunk, he would rape his daughters inside their house.

The girls told police the last time their father molested them was on March 22.

They said their father also threatened to harm them if they would reveal their ordeal to anyone.

The suspect is separated from his wife, the brother said. He also told police that his brother was confined for a year at the National Institute for Mental Health.

But the brother believed that the suspect might have used his alleged mental illness as an excuse to abuse his daughters.

The suspect denied the charges and blamed his neighbors for setting him up. He said the neighbors often saw him beating up his daughters, which was why they convinced the girls to file charges against him.

The suspect is now detained at the Caloocan police headquarters.

STARTING THEM YOUNG ROMY HOMILLADA

Two girls pick salvageable items at a big—and still growing garbage dump—in Dagat-Dagatan, Tondo, Manila

all about élan

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all about élan

Another road accident kills 1, injures 3

By Philip C. Tubeza

A DAY after two people were killed in an accident on Coastal Road in Cavite, another early morning vehicular accident yesterday left a farmer dead and three other people injured on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

Farmer Proceso Eugenio, 59, of 19-A Eugenio Compound, Sun-vil subdivision, Barangay Culiat, Tandang Sora, Quezon City, died a gruesome death after a Lucky 7 bus (NYL-272) dragged his body for about 10 meters after it ran over him, said the city hall's Special Traffic Action Group (STAG).

The STAG later arrested the bus driver, Nelson Garces, 27, of Laura Street, Old Balara, Quezon City, police said.

Nenita and Ernesto Marcos, of Caloocan, were injured when the bus rammed into their red Isuzu Hi-Lander (URL-434). A 16-year-old girl from BF Homes in Novaliches, Caloocan, was also seriously injured in the crash.

Eugenio was attending to his carabao in the grassy area along the highway when the accident happened around 6:45 a.m. yesterday, police said.

Witnesses told police that the bus was running fast and swerving from left to right on the southbound lane of Commonwealth Avenue when it ran over Eugenio.

Garces allegedly lost control of his vehicle and it climbed the sidewalk near the Philippine Atomic Energy Commission before it hit Eugenio, police said.

The bus dragged and almost mangled the victim's body, police added.

The driver, however, was not able to stop his bus, which swerved back to the highway.

It then rammed into the Hi-Lander, injuring the couple and the young girl. The girl was brought to the University of the Philippines campus infirmary in Diliman while the Marcoses were rushed to the East Avenue Medical Center, police said.

The authorities are preparing charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, multiple physical injuries and damages against the driver, police added.

Electrician robbed by three 'policemen'

INTRODUCING themselves as policemen, three men on board a car accosted an electrician and accused him of drug-pushing and then robbed him in Mandaluyong City early yesterday morning.

Exequiel Reyes, 26, of Bacoor, Cavite, told police he was on his way to see a relative in Barangay Hulo when a white Toyota Corolla car (UYR-729) stopped beside him.

Reyes said three men alighted from the car and identified themselves as policemen and accused him of being a drug pusher.

At gunpoint, one of them ordered him to board their car. He said they asked him to produce money for his freedom. But when he could not, one of them searched him and found in his wallet about P600.

"Take it anyway," Reyes quoted one of the men as telling his companions.

He said the three men dropped him off on Valdez Street in Makati City.

Insp. Efren Jugo, Mandaluyong police Criminal Investigation Division chief, said police have checked the license plate of the suspects with the Land Transportation Office and learned that the LTO has not assigned the plate to any vehicle.

Agnes E. Donato

'Slow' man stabbed dead

A FRUIT vendor who reportedly blew his top when his friends teased him for being a slowpoke in courting a girl was stabbed dead by his tormentors in Tondo, Manila on Sunday night.

Jojie Toledo, 27, a resident of 477 Baltazar Street, Tondo, died immediately from numerous stab wounds in different parts of the body.

SPO1 Ed Cabal of the city police's homicide section said Marvin Guinto and two other men identified only as Rodel and Tony ambushed Toledo in a dark portion of Moriones Street in Tondo.

Investigation showed Toledo became angry at his friends when, while they were drinking, they joked about his being slow in courting another fruit vendor. But the teasers also grew angry and were about to gang up on him until cooler heads intervened.

The three men waited for Toledo on Moriones Street and waylaid him as he was walking home.

Police, however, are also looking into reports that one of the suspects, who is also courting the girl, was jealous of Toledo. *Jerome Aning*

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Role of illiterate mom one of the best in LT's acting career

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

SHE may now be busy on the campaign trail to support the candidacy of her husband, **Rudy Fernandez,** who is running for the mayoral seat in Quezon City. Being a popular actress gives her a big edge in trying to get the votes for her hubby. She is recognized everywhere, from La Vista to Payatas, from White Plains to Galas.

But before becoming a politician's wife, multi-awarded actress **Lorna Tolentino** remains focused on her more important roles—wife, mother and actress.

Of the three hats she wears, Lorna finds being a mother to two teenage boys the most difficult and challenging and fulfilling. As a working mother to **Renz** and **Ralph**, Lorna always finds time to bond with them, usually in the company of dad Rudy.

They enjoy malling, swimming, eating out and driving out of town.

She considers herself mother first, not only to Renz and Ralph, but also to **Mark Anthony Fernandez,** Rudy's love child with actress **Alma Moreno.**

No matter how busy she is, Lorna helps her sons with their assignments and attends school activities where the presence of parents is required.

Lorna has long realized that while books and consultations with other parents are of great help, there's nothing like first-hand experiences in learning the ABCD of motherhood.

Lorna does a delicate balancing act in rearing Renz and Ralph, not being too conservative but not being too liberal either. She did not spare the rod when they were small, but now that they're teenagers she'd rather talk to them, reason with them to thresh out problems. There are times, however, when she refers them to their father for some man-to-man talk.

No wonder Lorna empathizes with her role in Viva Films' "Abakada Ina," an illiterate mother who learns how to read and write for the sake of her children. She dreams of a bright future for them, a future denied her because of lack of education.

"Abakada Ina" marks the return of **Eddie Garcia** to the directorial seat. The movie is jointly written by **Shaira Mella Salvador** and **Ramon Bayron.** Starring with Lorna are **Albert Martinez** as her uncaring husband, **Nida Blanca** as her overbearing mother-in-law and **Joanne Quintas** as the prostitute who urges her to learn how to read and write.

Matet de Leon, Aiza Marquez and **Hannah Camille Bustillos** play Lorna's children. **Bobby Andrews** is Albert's younger brother.

Lorna considers her role as illiterate mother in "Abakada Ina" one of the best in her brilliant acting career. She is totally deglamorized, the exact opposite of her image as one of the most beautiful and best-dressed women in the country.

Lorna has seven best actress awards: two for "Maging Akin Ka Lamang" (Star and Film Academy of the Philippines), one for "Luksong Tinik" (Manila Film Festival) and four for "Narito ang Puso Ko" (Urian, Star, Famas and FAP—a grandslam).

Lucky director

VIVA Films' upcoming comedy flick, "Baliktaran (Si Ace at si Daisy)," may have rough sailing with the new censors board not because of any lewd or objectionable scenes, but because of its title which implies a naughty, if not bawdy connotation.

That's why the movie's director, **Al Tantay,** points out it's just a working title, pending the rating from the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board.

But luck appears to be on *direk* Al's side these days. The comedy movies he megged for Viva Films—"Mana Mana, Tiba Tiba" and "Juan en Ted" are both blockbusters.

Now, he's at the helm of "Baliktaran," which casts two box office stars. **Rufa Mae Quinto,** fresh from the success of her solo movie, "Booba," and **Bayani Agbayani,** who starred with **Janno Gibbs** in "Juan en Ted."

In "Baliktaran," Rufa and Bayani do cross-dressing. He plays a gay, while she plays a tomboy. They are childhood playmates and their parents, who are the best of friends, made a pact that their respective children will marry each other.

Believe it or not, but "Baliktaran" was lying on Viva's desk since 1994. While brainstorming for a perfect script for the pair, they discovered an old one.

It was direk Al's first time to handle Rufa Mae, who is now tagged as the comedy princess, because of the huge box office. success of "Booba."

"I wasn't familiar with her style so I left her alone for a while," direk Al says. "I was the one in for a surprise because she is perfect in her comic timing, though at times, our ideas didn't jive. But in the long run, I wanted to clap for her because her punchlines were perfect for the scenes, more than what I really expected."

PERFECT screen chemistry. Bayani Agbayani and Rufa Mae Quinto

TOLENTINO. Wife, mother, actress

Direk Al didn't also have any problems with his leading man.

"One look at each other and he knows what I want from him," he says of Bayani. "We immediately understand each other. Before, when I worked with him in 'Mana Mana' and 'Juan en Ted,' I thought he was perfect for a male screen partner. But Bayani and Rufa Mae have a perfect chemistry. Riot *ang* scenes *nila* in the movie. They will really make viewers laugh."

Direk Al notes Bayani and Rufa Mae are both natural comedians and poking fun at each other appears to be second nature to them.

"That's why we never had the problem on the set," he says. "In fact, we had trouble trying to continue the shooting every take because everybody would always laugh."

Greetings

HAPPY birthday today to my brother, **Jemuel Salterio,** and happy graduation on Friday to my god daughter, **Sara Almario,** who's getting her primary school diploma from St. Benedict College in Alabang.

Concert producer throws hat into political ring

LIFE is full of cosmic biases. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. Everyone loves to win, nobody wants to lose, especially in an election.

Campaign periods in the Philippines are always interesting. It is a time of festivity, dancing, singing, even slapstick comedy, with old politicians and new aspirants themselves as the performers.

What makes up a sure-win campaign? Are movie stars as campaigners still effective in winning votes?

According to Jacob Fernandez, president and CEO of JLF Organization, an ordinate, well-planned and organized lineup of activities will boost an otherwise drab and conventional way of campaigning.

"Like any other event, the best and most elective way to carry out a campaign strategy is to have a concrete action plan and a dynamic support system," Fernandez says.

Composed of young people, JLF Organization is a very visible concert and event production company. The growing list of talents for whom it has produced concerts includes such big names as Martin Nievera, Ariel Rivera, Lani Misalucha, Jaya, Side A, Freestyle and Ai-Ai de las Alas.

JLF is also into talent management. Among its artists are Paolo Bediones, Maxine and David Bunevacz.

Today, after nearly three years in the entertainment industry doing production work for product launches, concerts and events, JLF is spreading its wings wider as it offers its services to political candidates.

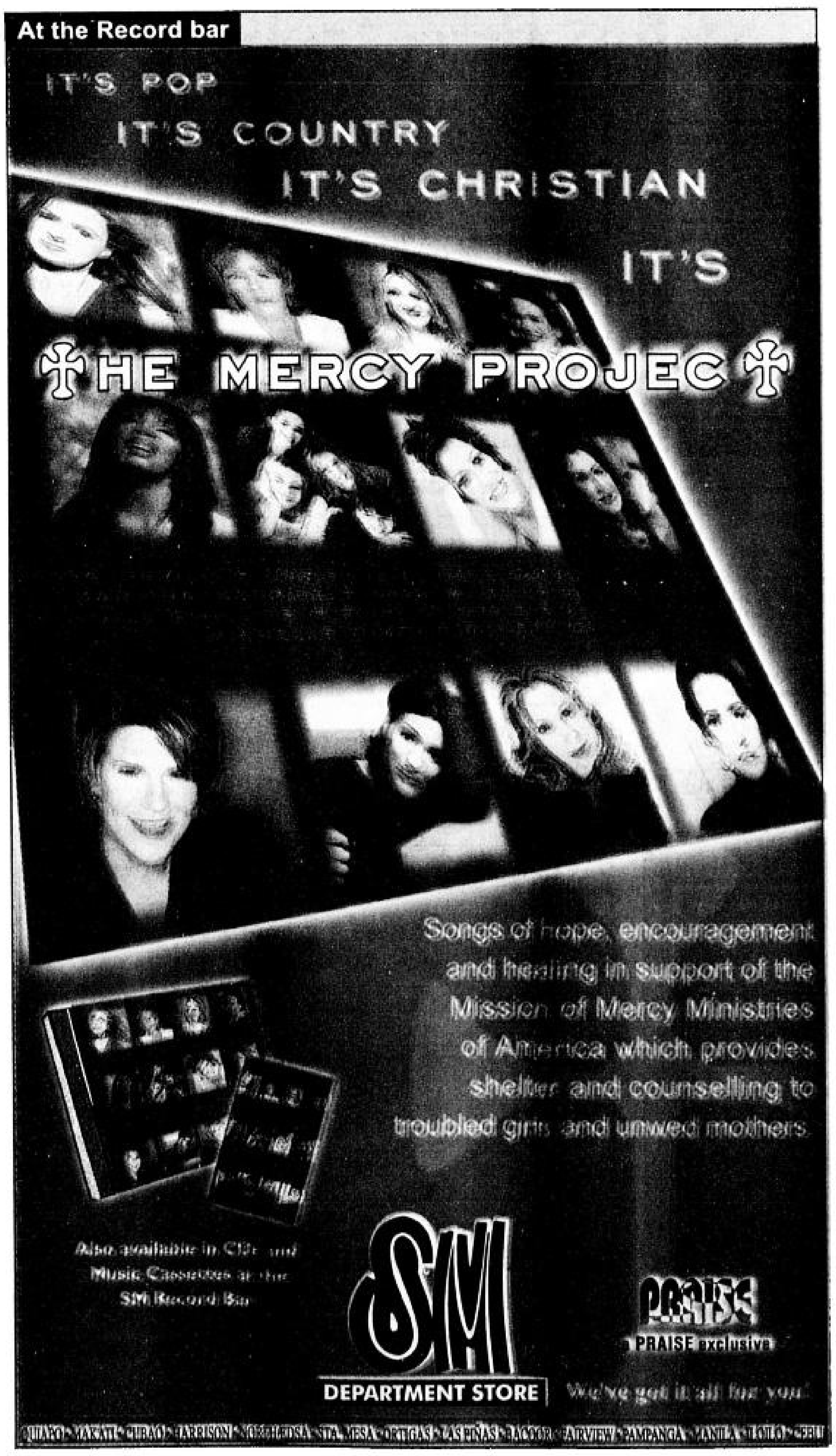
"Since JLF is primarily into event management and promotion, we know the fundamental and ultimate components that make any occasion a success," Fernandez says.

He says campaigns don't have to be a monotonous string of wearisome speeches. In fact, most, if not all politicians nowadays do their campaign rounds with many celebrities from the movies and theater.

For the candidates in the May 14 elections, JLF offers the following campaign services: advance party, full entertainment, lights and sounds, PA system, stage set-up, camera rental, audio-visual presentation, confetti, fireworks and other effects, poster and sticker design and jingle composition.

Interested parties may call JLF Organization at 634-7776 and 638-4244 or visit its offices at 1403-A Philippine Stock Exchange Center East Tower, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

FERNANDEZ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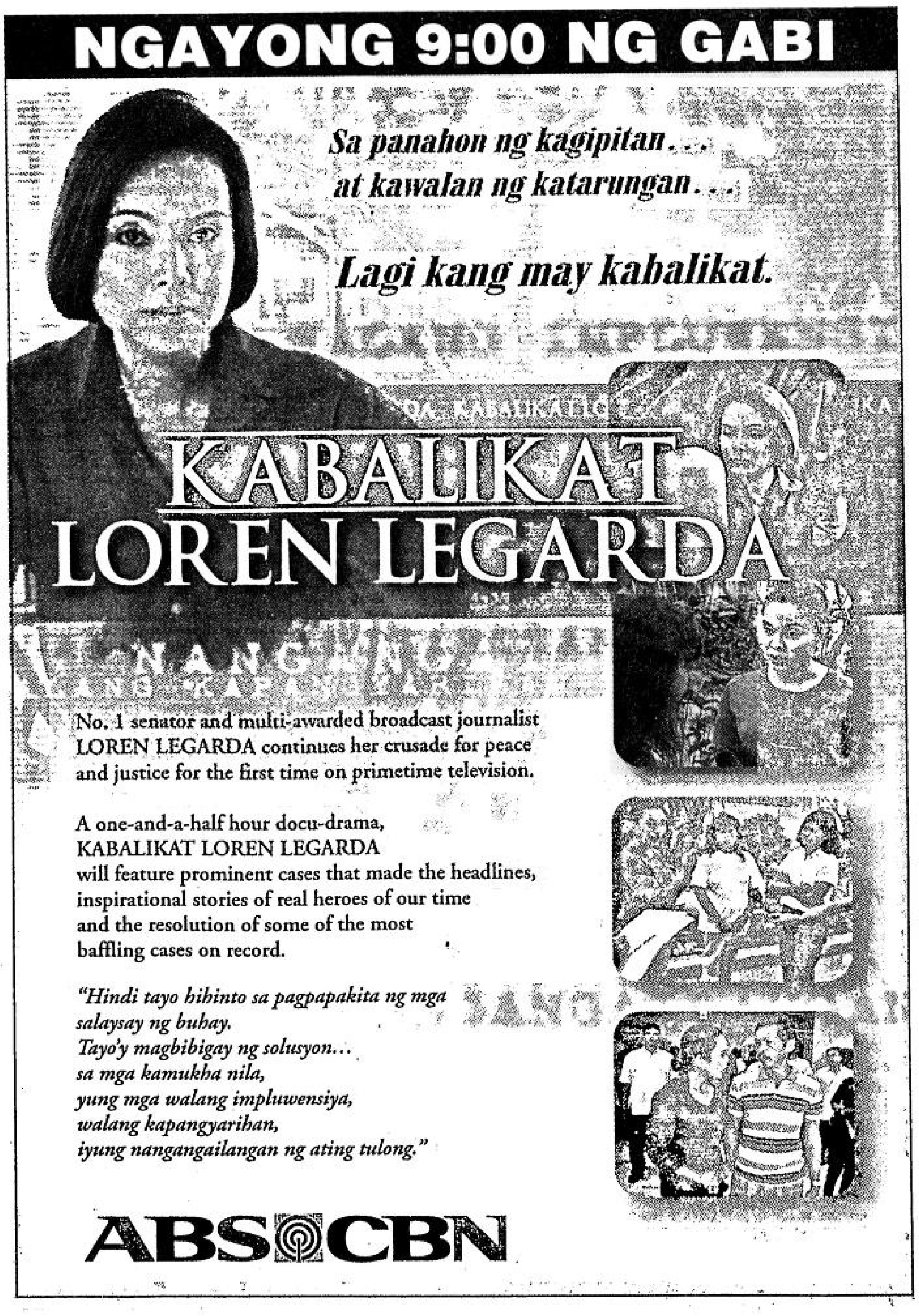
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4	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
5	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
6	DOLBY SURROUND	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
7	DOLBY SURROUND	KRISTO
8	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCER

SM CENTERPOINT 7149522 • 7161416

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3	DTS	GLADIATOR (RI)
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5	DOLBY DIGITAL	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
6	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	SEDUCER
7	DOLBY SURROUND	CROUCHING TIGER (RI)
8	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
9	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
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3	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCER
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5	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
6	DOLBY SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN (RI)
7	DOLBY DIGITAL	GLADIATOR (RI)
8	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
9	DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
10	DOLBY SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
11	DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
12	DOLBY SURROUND	UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1	DOLBY DIGITAL	GLADIATOR (RI)
2	DOLBY DIGITAL	THEY NEST
3	DOLBY SURROUND	THE GIFT
4	DOLBY SURROUND	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	WEDDING PLANNER
6	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	MS. CONGENIALITY
7	DOLBY SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
8	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCER
9	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
10	DOLBY SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
11	DOLBY SURROUND	KRISTO
12	DOLBY SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN (RI)

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2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	HOSTAGE
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	SEDUCER

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1	DOLBY DIGITAL	SECRET OF THE ANDES
2	DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
3	DOLBY DIGITAL	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
4	DTS	THEY NEST
5	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
6	DOLBY SURROUND	ERIN BROCKOVICH
7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
9	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
10	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
12	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

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1	DOLBY SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2	DOLBY SURROUND	TANGING YAMAN (RI)
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	KRISTO
4	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCER
5	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
6	DOLBY SURROUND	THE GIFT
7	DTS	GLADIATOR (RI)
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
10	DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
12	DOLBY SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

SM SOUTHMALL 8066868 • 8066782

1	ULTRA SURROUND	SEDUCER
2	ULTRA SURROUND	GLADIATOR (RI)
3	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
5	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
6	ULTRA SURROUND	KRISTO
7	ULTRA SURROUND	THEY NEST
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
9	ULTRA SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
10	ULTRA SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

TUTUBAN CENTER 2514302

1	ULTRA SURROUND	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THEY NEST
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

SM CEBU 2313876

1	DOLBY SURROUND	BILLY ELLIOT
2	ULTRA SURROUND	GLADIATOR (RI)
3	ULTRA SURROUND	CHOCOLAT
4	ULTRA SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
5	ULTRA SURROUND	TOTAL AIKIDO
6	ULTRA SURROUND	SECRET OF THE ANDES
7	DOLBY SURROUND	BABAENG PUTIK

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	ULTRA SURROUND	PANABLA
2	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
3	ULTRA SURROUND	PURPLE STORM
4	ULTRA SURROUND	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
5	ULTRA SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
6	ULTRA SURROUND	CHOCOLAT
7	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
8	ULTRA SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION

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1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	GLADIATOR (RI)
3	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THE GIFT
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6 (GOLD SDDS)	YOU'VE GOT MAIL
7 (GOLD DOLBY)	WEDDING PLANNER
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5	
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2	RESERVE
3	SEDUCER
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6	GLADIATOR
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1	
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3	KRISTO
4	BABAENG PUTIK
5	UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA...
6	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
7 (DTS)	SEDUCER
8 (SDDS)	THEY NEST
9 (DOLBY)	SAVE THE LAST DANCE

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	
6	

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	BABAENG PUTIK
3	,OOOPS, TEKA LANG
4 (SDDS)	SEDUCER
5	UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA...
6 (DOLBY)	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
7 (DTS)	GLADIATOR
8	KRISTO
9	UHAW SA INIT

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	GLADIATOR
2	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
4	UHAW SA INIT
5 (SDDS)	SEDUCER
6	KRISTO
7 (DOLBY)	THEY NEST
8	OOPS TEKA LANG

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3 (DTS)	GLADIATOR
4	SEDUCER
5 (SDDS)	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
6 (DOLBY)	UHAW SA INIT
7 (DOLBY)	KRISTO

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
Lords	BODY TO BODY
Jennet	BABAENG PUTIK

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	KRISTO
2	GLADIATOR
3	THEY NEST
4	UHAW SA INIT

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

1	
3	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Super Cinerama
(Manila) tel 733.4226 or 733.4238

1	THEY NEST
2	SEDUCER
3	UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA..
4	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
5	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY

Divisoria Mall
(Manila) tel 244.4560 or 244.4619

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2	UHAW SA INIT
3	TOTAL AIKIDO
4	GLADIATOR
5	BABAENG PUTIK
6	OOOPS. TEKA LANG

Baclaran LRT Cinema
tel 512.0115 or 512.0116

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2	UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA...
3	KRISTO

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	BABAENG PUITK
2	UHAW SA INIT
3 (DTS)	GLADIATOR

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	BABAENG PUTIK
2 (DTS)	WEDDING PLANNER
3 (DOLBY)	GLADIATOR
4	THE GIFT

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	GLADIATOR
2	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3	UHAW SA INIT
4 (DTS)	KRISTO

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	THE GIFT
2	BABAENG PUTIK
3 (DTS)	GLADIATOR
4	TOTAL AIKIDO
5	UHAW SA INIT

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	THEY NEST
2	BABAENG PUTIK
3	UHAW SA INIT

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 536.5101

1	THEY NEST
2	
3	UHAW SA INIT

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	
2	
3	UHAW SA INIT

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	
2	
3	

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2	
3	
4	

Cabuyao
CINEMAS TEL (049) 5314808

1 (DTS)	BABAENG PUTIK
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	UHAW SA INIT
2	BABAENG PUTIK
3	TOTAL AIKIDO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	BABAENG PUTIK
2	UHAW SA INIT
3	THE BAIT
4	WEDDING PLANNER

Berma
tel 879.2168

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2	UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2	
3	
4	

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY SR)	GLADIATOR
2	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3	ANAK
4 (DTS SR)	SAVE THE LAST DANCE

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4. SEDUCER
5. PERFECT STORM / ROMEO MUST DIE
6. SAVE THE LAST DANCE
7. THE GIFT

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2. THE EXORCIST / GREEN MILE
3. THEY NEST
4. SAVE THE LAST DANCE
5. PERFECT STORM / ROMEO MUST DIE
6. DIMAPIGIL ANG INIT

BACOLOD (034)441-0453

1. WEDDING PLANNER
2. SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
3. MS. CONGENIALITY
4. QUILLS
5. TOO MUCH FLESH
6. PURPLE STORM

DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	BABAENG PUTIK
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	WEDDING PLANNER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	OOPS TEKA LANG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	THE GIFT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	TOTAL AIKIDO
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	TOTAL AIKIDO
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	UHAW SA INIT
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
MIRAMAR	TUHOG / FIRST DESIRE
ODEON	GLADIATOR
ODEON-2	SEDUCER
ROBEN	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
TANDEM-1	UHAW SA INIT
TANDEM-2	TOTAL AIKIDO
TIMES	EYE OF BEHOLDER / REMEMBER THE TITANS
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	TOTAL AIKIDO
QUEZON-1	UHAW SA INIT
REMAR	SEDUCER
REMAR-2	UHAW SA INIT
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	BABAENG PUTIK
OCEAN CINEMA-A	PANABLA
OCEAN CINEMA-B	CRISELDA
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	SECRET OF THE ANDES
CINEMA-2	MS. CONGENIALITY
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
CINEMA-2	BABAENG PUTIK
CINEMA-3	UHAW SA INIT
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	QUILLS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	BAIT
CINEMA-6	PANABLA
CINEMA-7	UHAW SA INIT
CINEMA-8	MS. CONGENIALITY
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	THEY NEST
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE GIFT
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
CINEMA-12	WEDDING PLANNER
CINEMA-14	TOTAL AIKIDO
CINEMA-15	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
LORES	
CINEMA-2	RED PLANET
CINEMA-3	PROOF OF LIFE
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	CHOCOLAT
CINEMA-2	GLADIATOR
CINEMA-3	CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON
CINEMA-4	THE GIFT
CINEMA-5	TANGING YAMAN
CINEMA-6	SAVE THE LAST DANCE

MTV Philippines kicks off the summer with "Blazin' Bold in Boracay," from April 16 to 22, with simultaneous events happening at Pearl of the Pacific Beach Resort, the official residence of MTV Philippines for this event, and Cocomangas Beach Resort and Bar.

The event starts off on April 16 with contests and games at Cocomangas Beach Resort and Bar. Get transported to a different era with the theme "Greek Toga."

Over at Pearl of the Pacific, participate in more contests and games, relax and groove to a chill-out party, and finally get up and moving at a dance party to be held later in the evening.

Prizes for the games include the successful Backstreet Boys "Black and Blue" album, which comes with a special VCD that features Backstreet Boys videos, exclusive interviews and performances.

This special edition CD package is "Secret Diary" and is given exclusively to MTV Philippines to distribute. Dance your heart out on April 17 (Tuesday) at Cocomangas as Manfred Ruiz (a.k.a. DJ Mumph) unleashes head-boppin' progressive house that slowly morphs into ethereal progressive trance.

"Bedrock" is the theme for the day, as the famous Flintstone home becomes the home for beach activities.

On the other side of the beach at Pearl of the Pacific, join the fun as more contests and games are held with professional tattoo artists coloring up the beach scene.

On April 18 (Wednesday), get ready as Cocomangas Beach Resort and Bar transforms into a " Mad Hat Masquerade."

The partying continues at the Pearl of the Pacific with another chill-out gig and more dancing.

Drink up at the San Miguel-sponsored beer fest and groove to ethnic band Exposure and Tribal Band over at Cocomangas on April 19 (Thursday), when it turns into a Hawaiian luau. End the day with a dance party with mixes by DJ Mumph.

The festivities commence on April 20 (Friday) with a "City of Angels" theme at Cocomangas with more local bands from Boracay enticing beach-goers.

Join the excitement of Mr. And Ms San Miguel 2001 search and the "Wet and Wild Open."

At Pearl of the Pacific relax to a chill-out party and cap the night off with popular band Mojofly, an unplugged performance by Wency Cornejo and an all-out party.

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

First things first

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

DO TV reviews have any effect on the shows being commented on? Well, sometimes. One of our friends at ABS-CBN reports that, the day after our reviews of the new "Alas Singko Y Medya" came out in this newspaper, the hosts who were alluded to did something to rectify the negative points we noted about them.

One of them went to the hairdresser and got her russet hair coloring toned down to a more natural darker color, and another wiped off the distractingly excessive eye shadow she had on during the initial telecast.

Even better, our suggestion that the traffic coverage should include suggestions for alternative routes to take when confronted with gridlock has been taken positively, and implemented in subsequent telecasts.

Thanks for being so open to "constructive criticism, guys. We know of other TV people who refuse to admit that they are performing less than absolutely perfectly.

Other shrug our negative notes off by claiming that we're biased in favor of their competitors, or even that we're on their rivals' payroll. People have followed our TV-film reviews through the years know better, thank goodness.

In fact, we've been getting requests from some show biz people to critique their work, not so much for public consumption but more for their personal information, so they can improve as hosts or performers.

This is gratifying to us because it indicates that some people in the industry value our opinion. But we hasten to state that our real objective is to be of service, not so much to the industry, but to its audience.

We review TV shows and films not just to encourage the gifted and criticize the mediocre, but mostly to persuade the members of the audience to become more discerning, outspoken and demanding, so the industry will be pressured into giving them the competently produced, highly entertaining and insightful productions that viewers (that's you!) fully deserve to see.

We hope that members of the audience take entertainment and their power to affect it more seriously. If we refuse to get more critically involved, people in show biz will continue taking us for granted and doing shoddy work, as they have for much too long.

Meet Topher Grace

"THAT '70s Show" on ABC-5 (Tuesday at 9 p.m.) stars young **Topher Grace** as **Eric**. Interestingly, this is his first TV role. How did he get such a big break so early in his career?

It turns out that producers **Bonnie** and **Terry Turner**'s son attended the same boarding school as Topher, and they enjoyed his performance as the lead in their school play, "A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum." A year later, they asked Topher to read for "That '70s Show"—and hired him on the spot.

Topher says "That '70s Show" is more than just about drugs, bad clothes and retro references. He thinks the show has a good chance of staying on the tube for a number of TV seasons because it has "timeless" characters.

Recently, Topher made a leap to the big screen when he acted in the hit movie "Traffic," with **Michael Douglas** and **Catherine Zeta-Jones.**

'Air Bud, World Pup'

THE NEW movie, "Air Bud, World Pup," features a number of professional and amateur soccer athletes, canines who play the sport, and kids who fight off some dognappers.

In every "Air Bud" movie, star canine Buddy has to overcome characters who are villainous but not all that scary. This time around, the heroic dog confronts two misguided characters, **Sherbert** and **Webster** (played by **Martin Ferrero** and **Don McMillan**).

The movie's young leads are **Kevin Zegers as Josh** and **Brittany Paige Bouch** as his love interest, **Emma**.

'THE GIFT'

Gothic murder mystery jolting but not chilling enough

BY EMMIE G. VELARDE

REVIEW

ANNIE is a psychic. People come to her with very disturbing questions. She sorts out issues, unravels knots, nudges away mental blocks for them by "reading" special playing cards with deceptively sparse images that look more like novel lamp designs than characters in the tarot.

In the movie "The Gift," Psychic Annie helps, among others, a battered wife, a man who had been abused as a child, and the father of a murder victim.

I bet she can help movie censors, movie critics, movie lovers, moviemakers, church leaders and government officials agree on the definition of pornography. I am serious: All three composite cases written into the screenplay are end results of indiscriminate and/or forcible sex.

Cate Blanchett, whom we first saw in the period film "Elizabeth," plays Annie, a character based on the psychic/astrologer mother of scriptwriter Billy Bob Thornton—yes, Angelina Jolie's beloved.

I would have been thrilled to have a mom like Annie (or Cate, who is a perfect choice for the role), a multi-layered person with a face as serene as the Pacific but given to emotions just as deep and, when threatened, exhibits a glimmer of some ferocious cat.

Complexity

I thought I saw a glimpse of this fetching complexity in ex-censors chief Nicanor Tiongson during a TV interview in the heat of verbal tussles over the celebrated "Live Show."

Tiongson is not a psychic, as far as I know, but I'm quite sure he has a fairly good idea of who the true victim is in the madness that has ensued (for starters, I'm sure he will not say it's Lily Monteverde).

Better yet, Tiongson appears to be clear on who is trying to gag what, or what is trying to finish whom. Why, even Psychic Annie took a dangerous while to figure out her biggest quiz!

Right in the eye of the storm, Tiongson has come across as the most informed, the most lucid, the most detached and therefore the most credible, of the many personalities who have tried and are still trying to "shed light" on the matter.

I digress.

The Australian Blanchett, known in Hollywood as an "accent chameleon," much like Meryl Sleep, had pulled the rug from under the producers' first choice, Jodie Foster.

Real-life psychic

In researching her role, Blachett reportedly met with a real-life psychic in Savannah (the film was set in Georgia) who had done a lot of police and FBI work, and tried to tape-record their session. The woman told the actress, "Electrical things tend not to work around me."

"And it wouldn't!" Blanchett recalls. "So I took out another tape recorder, and that wouldn't work, either. I thought maybe it was the socket, because I was staying in a really old house. But when she left, I plugged it into the same socket and it worked!"

Should the 31-year-old actress ever visit the Philippines, someone should greet her at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport with a list of local psychics for future reference. Or put her in touch with an erstwhile researcher of "Balitang K."

"The Gift," classified as a "gothic murder mystery," is obviously doing well enough to run another week in metro theaters.

Where I went to see it, there was a queue for tickets that cost P110 each for guaranteed seats. More than half consisted of schoolgirls in uniform. This is easy to explain: Keanu Reeves is in the cast as a hyper-ventilating hog of a husband to Hilary Swank, who play Annie's second most faithful client, a woman who wears black-eyes and bruises like medals of valor.

That aside, I must say the jigs and jolts are fun, but no more chilling than those offered up in, say, "What Lies Beneath." But then I read somewhere that the cast had such unusual faith in the project, that they took pay cuts to see it through. Otherwise, the reported $10-million production budget would never have been enough for the top players alone.

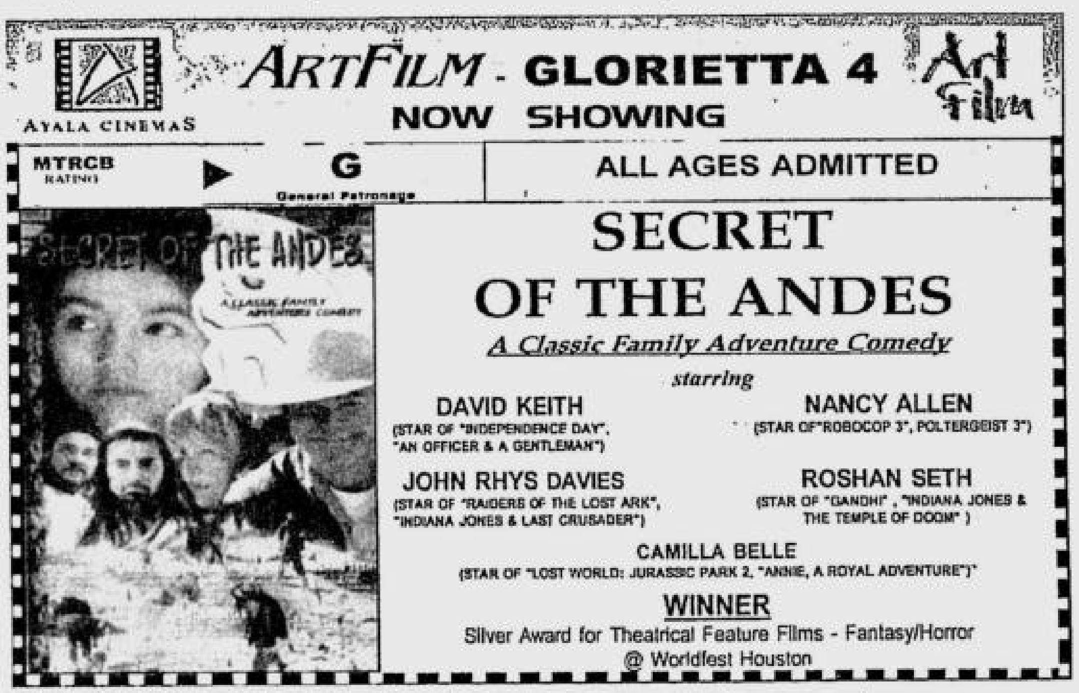
Voice of truth

Did I miss anything? Incest, wife battery, spurned love that exacts absolute revenge, plus paranormal elements, modern-day inquisitors, voice of truth that find a sympathetic ear almost too late, a disembodied spirit staying around long enough to repay a debt—sounds like a formula to me now, one that is readily available to any filmmaker with enough resources.

Given the equivalent of $10 million, I'll wager that Jose Javier Reyes can dish out a much, much better *manghuhula* movie, unless he'd rather make a sequel to what could now be his best-remembered, although probably not his best, ouvre.

'GLADIATOR' RE-RELEASED

After winning five Academy Awards including best picture and best actor for Russell Crowe, "Gladiator" will be re-released in local theaters starting today.



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ROSHAN SETH (STAR OF "GANDHI" , "INDIANA JONES & THE TEMPLE OF DOOM")
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GLADIATOR - P 13 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30
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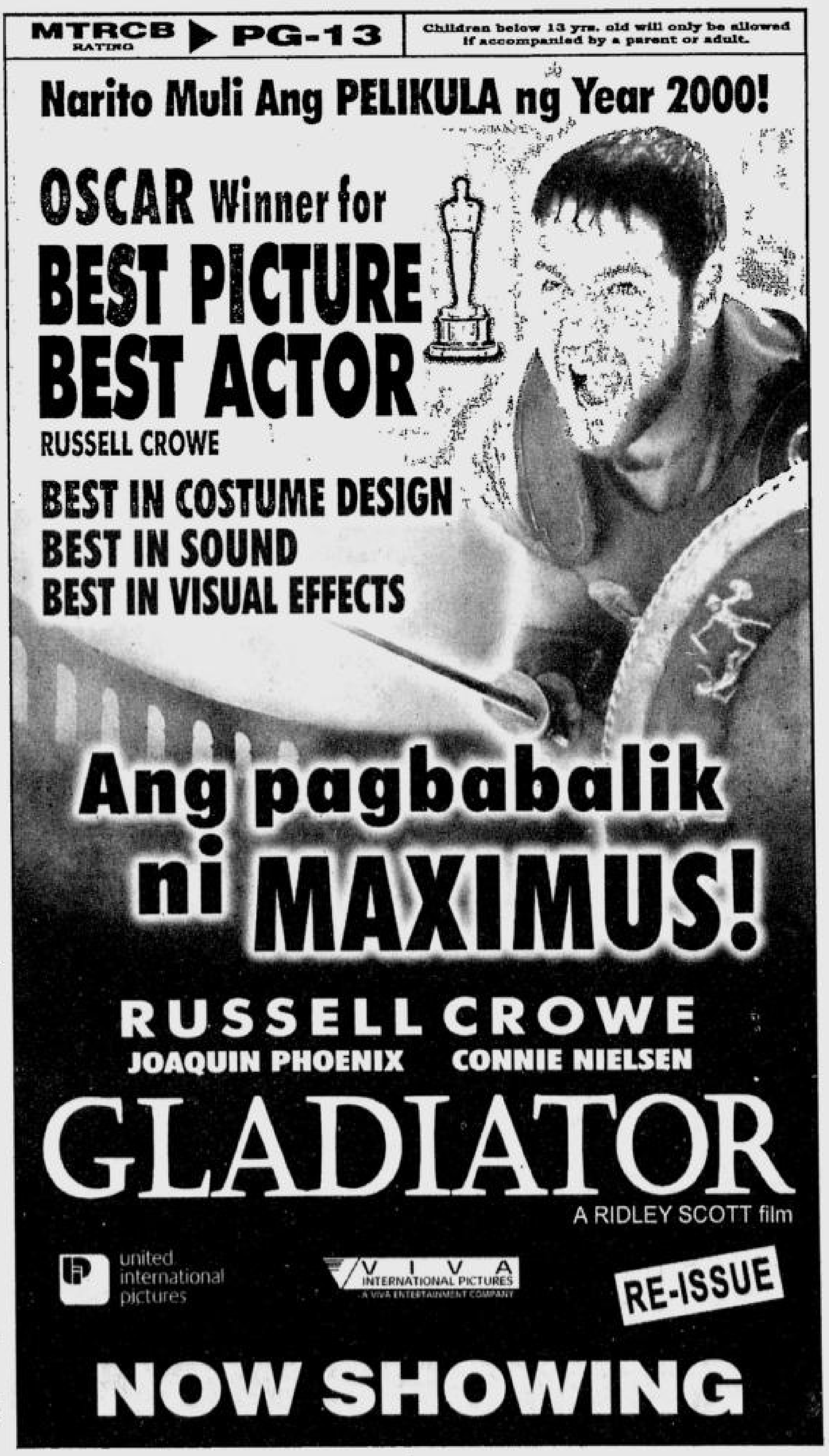
THE GIFT - P 13 12:00, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00
TANGING YAMAN - G 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
SAVE THE LAST DANCE - P 13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00



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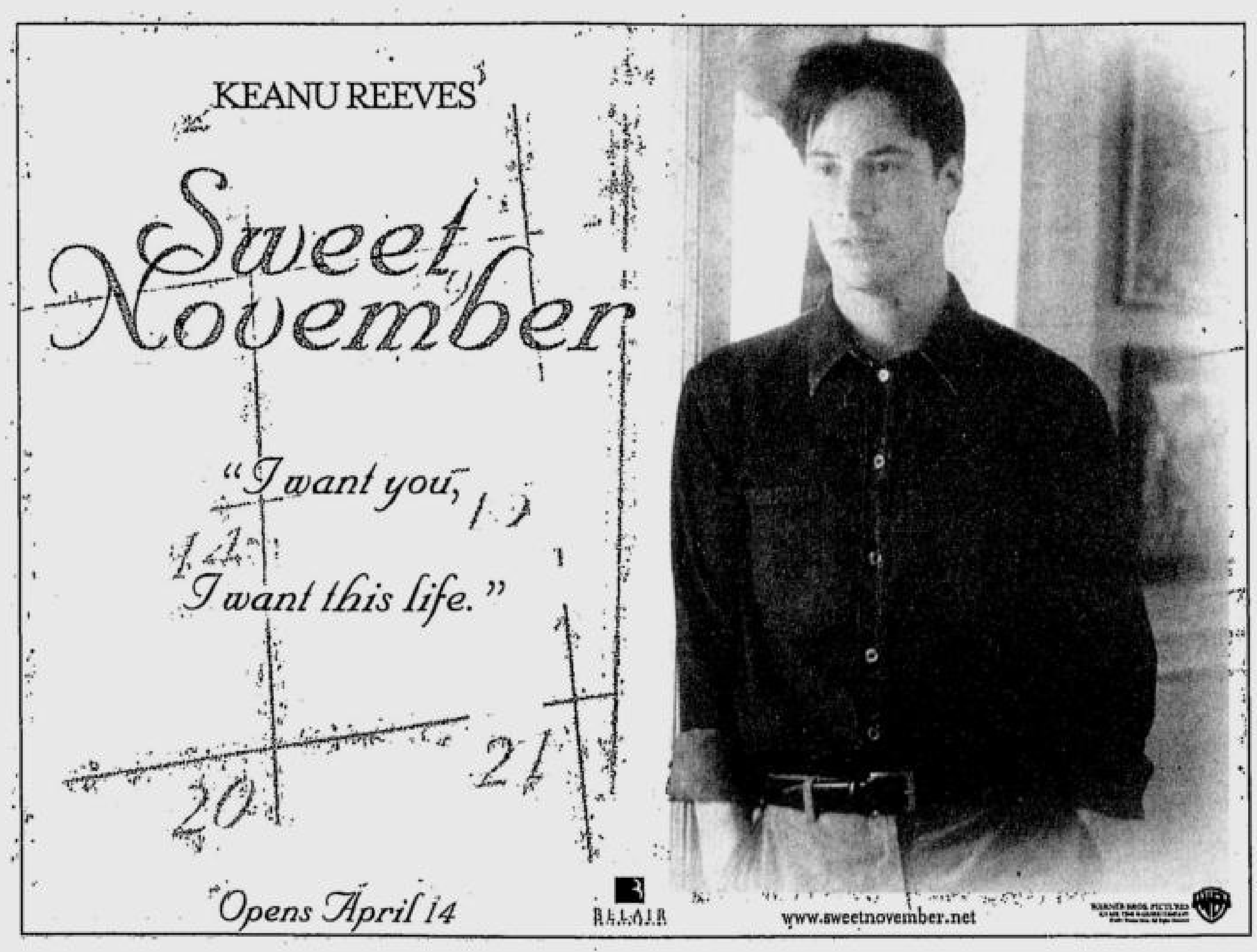

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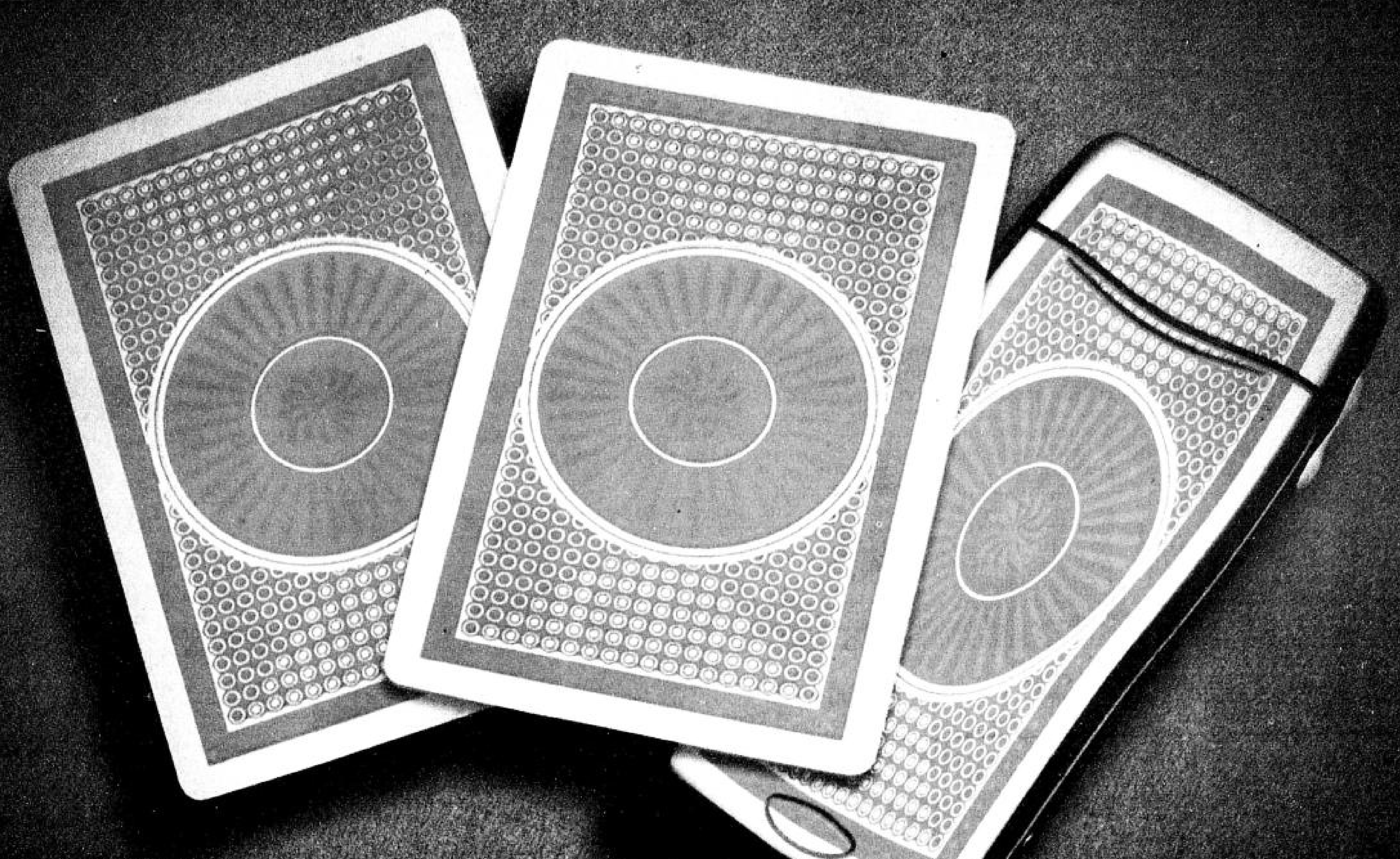

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B1

BUSINESS

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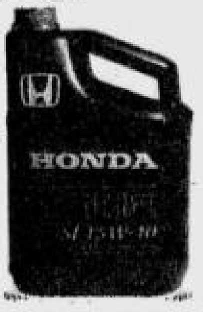

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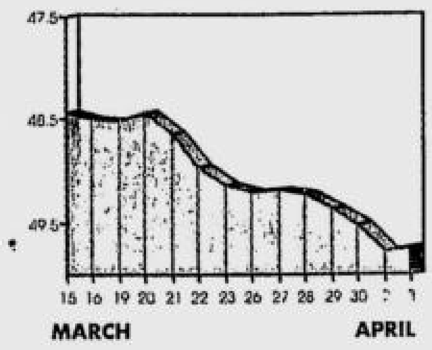


GRAPHS BY ROBERT B. ANDRES

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱49.73 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 3, 2001

¥125.66 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 125.66 as of 5 p.m., April 3, 2001

GOLD:$256.60/257.10
per ounce Hong Kong, April 3, 2001

STOCK MARKET

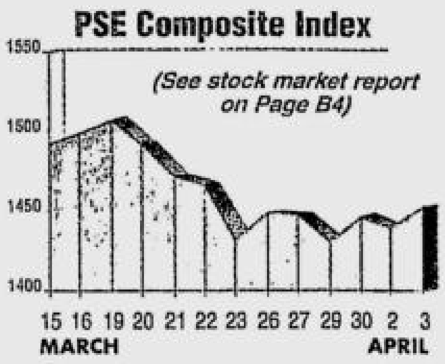
Stocks end up

STOCKS posted marginal gains in light trade yesterday with investors focusing on cheap selected blue chip issues like mall developer SM Prime Holdings and Manila Electric Co.

Traders said the market

STOCKS/ B3

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Export slowdown to cut economic growth to 3.8%

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

A SLOWDOWN in exports has prompted the National Economic and Development Authority to scale down economic growth target this year to only 3.8 percent from an earlier forecast of as much as 4.3 percent.

This means growth in gross domestic product this year would be lower than last year's actual growth of 3.9 percent under the administration of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Economic Planning Secretary Dante Canlas said the slowdown in the US and Japanese economies, two of the country's biggest trading partners, would chop export growth to about 4 percent this year from 8.7 percent last year.

"What could happen is that we may not be looking at a higher growth anymore, which is 4.3 percent," he said, but stressing that the lower end of the GDP growth of 3.8 percent remained attainable.

Canlas said other drivers of the economy such as private investments, construction and real estate should help buoy the Philippine economy this year.

He said the Macapagal administration was also counting on improved investment and consumer confidence to continue propelling the economy.

"Declining interest rates are also helping a lot," the Neda chief said.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has lowered interest rates considerably to 10 percent for overnight borrowing and 12.25 percent for overnight lending. This has also brought down the government's borrowing rate back to single-digit levels.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the central bank would likely keep rates stable for the meantime.

The BSP governor is projecting inflation rate in March to range between 6.5 and 7 percent from 6.7 percent in February.

"Under this scenario and the Fed not doing anything, we might just stay at current levels. If inflation is lower, then we may have to re-think and revise," Buenaventura said.

Canlas said the 3.8-percent growth target would already incorporate the decline in exports.

The government feels the GDP growth projection of the International Monetary Fund at 3.3 percent is very pessimistic. Likewise, the Fund's forecast that inflation would peak at 8 percent by the end of the first semester is also not realistic.

Last year, growth in GDP hit 3.9 percent and inflation averaged 4.4 percent despite a serious political crisis that led to the ouster of the Estrada administration.

The government expects recovery to start in four to six months. However, the IMF sees this recovery taking place longer than this period but refuses to give a more detailed time frame.

The IMF is concerned about the country's ability to control its budget deficit after the shortfall swelled to P136.1 billion last year from its target of P62.5 billion.

This year, the Macapagal administration wants to pin down the deficit to P145 billion although it had admitted the budget gap could swell to as much as P225 billion.

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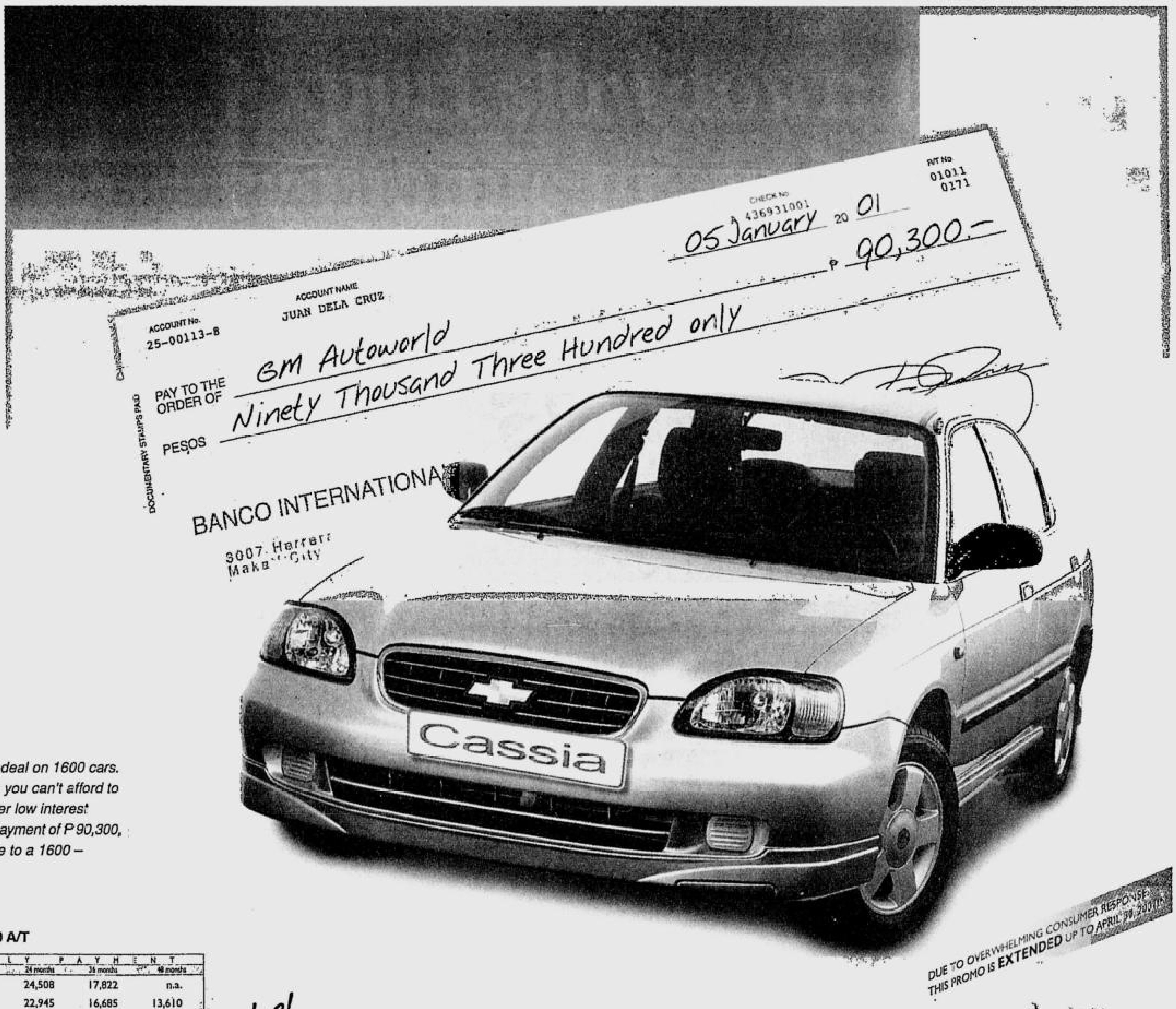

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240,800	30,100	20,592	16,694	12,139	9,902
301,000	25,083	16,722	13,568	9,866	8,048

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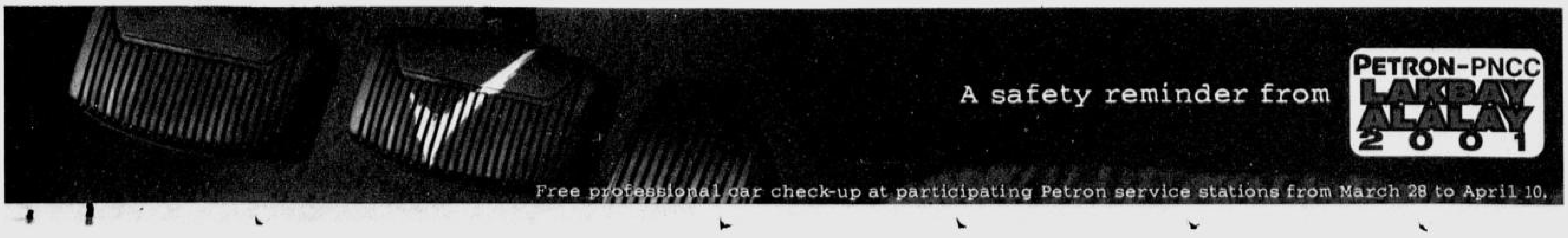
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February exports dip as US slowdown bites

PHILIPPINE merchandise exports for February eased 3.3 percent from a year ago to $2.805 billion, as the country began to feel the brunt of slower growth in the United States, its key trading partner, economists said yesterday.

Exports stood at $2.902 billion in February 2000. Exports were down 2.9 percent against January's $2.889 billion.

Economic Planning Secretary Dante Canlas said slower export growth could mean the Philippines might not be able to achieve the higher end of its gross domestic product (GDP) growth target this year.

The government's GDP growth target for this year is between 3.8 percent and 4.3 percent.

Audi Pantillano, an economist at Securities 2000, said the lower export growth was expected because of the US slowdown.

"We see this continuing for the rest of the year. We're looking at a contraction of 5 to 10 percent in exports value for 2001," Pantillano said.

The National Statistics Office (NSO) said receipts from electronics components, accounting for 56.4 percent of the aggregate export revenue in February, fell by 7.5 percent to $1.58 billion. The biggest drop came from semiconductors.

Exports to the United States, accounting for 27.1 percent of exports for the month, declined by 13.6 percent from a year ago to $759.66 million from $878.76 million.

But other economists viewed the contraction as slightly less than expected.

The NSO figures showed exports amounted to $5.694 billion in the first two months of the year, up from $5.619 billion in the same period last year.

"This is a bit surprising. I would have thought we would already start seeing contraction. I think there's consensus on zero or near-zero growth for exports this year," said Emilio Neri, an economist at Abacus Securities.

Neri said two factors might still cushion the US impact—a continuous gain in export market share and capacity build-up of new companies in export processing zones.

"Even if the entire pie shrinks, a bigger slice can still translate to growth," he said. *Reuters*

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
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A corporation belonging to the 1999 Top Corporations of the Philippines (the "Corporation") is inviting qualified providers of outpatient clinical and dental services who wish to supply its services to the Corporation's employees. Approximate number of employees to be served is 10,000. Required services include:

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- Dental services - emergency dental treatment, extraction, filling, prophylaxis, dental examinations
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Indicative quotations for the following items are being requested:

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			Per Patient	Per Hour
			(Pls. Check)	
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Dentist				

Minimum basic qualifications for the interested Suppliers shall be:

- Five (5) years experience in the provisioning of outpatient clinical/dental services to employees of commercial and industrial establishments.
- Registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as a:
  - (i) corporation with a minimum Php3.0 Million paid-up capital; or
  - (ii) professional partnership

Kindly mail all entries to **P.O. Box 952 Manila, Attention: Procurement Center, Re: Supply of Clinical and Dental Services (Not to be opened except by authorized personnel).** Deadline for submission is **April 20, 2001.**

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ROBERTO Romulo (right), chair of the Foundation for Information Technology and Education Development (FIT-ED), discusses with (from left) Oracle Asia Pacific Division EVP Derek Williams, Oracle Education Initiatives director Darren Rushworth and Oracle Philippines managing director Bernard Yu in yesterday's press conference on Oracle's latest initiative.

Oracle invests ₱270M in IT education program

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

AMERICAN software giant Oracle Corp. is investing P270 million to expand its ongoing program to build world-class Filipino information technology workers.

Darren Rushworth, director of Oracle Education Initiatives for Asia Pacific, said Oracle has already pumped in P165 million for its international program that would prepare graduating students for IT jobs worldwide.

Roughly 20,000 students are part of the Oracle Academic Initiative which is being implemented in over 15 colleges and universities in 13 regions all over the country. Through Oracle's program, Filipinos gain access to world-class software and support, cutting edge IT curriculum, faculty education and certification resources.

The Philippines served as the testing ground for Oracle's program in 1998. Since then, Oracle has invested over $154 million worth of software licenses and support services to the Asia Pacific region.

"Our objective is to invest in the provision of world-class IT resources and training and providing relevant industry skills to ensure adequate manpower for Philippine industries," Rushworth said.

The program was initially conducted in the Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, University of the Philippines at Los Baños, and University of San Carlos, Cebu.

The program has been expanded to Ateneo de Davao University, Ateneo de Zamboanga University, Central Philippine University-Iloilo, Computer Arts and Technology School-Bicol, JE Mondejar College-Leyte, Luzon Colleges-Pangasinan, St. Anthony School System-Pampanga, St. Louis University-Baguio, St. Paul University-Cagayan, and UP Diliman.

Oracle is hot on the heels of the entry of top-notch IT schools such as NIIT in the Philippines. The leading computer training schools in the country are STI College and AMA.

Law bars Pagcor sale, says ex-DOF usec

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

A FORMER finance official criticized yesterday as unrealistic a proposal to sell to the public 40 percent of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

In an interview, former Finance Undersecretary Joel Bañares, a consultant to Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo, said Congress would have to amend a law before Pagcor could be privatized through an initial public offering.

Bañares said while Pagcor's charter allowed a partial privatization, a decree issued by the late strongman, Ferdinand Marcos, presented a problem that could derail any plan to sell the gaming firm.

The decree required Pagcor to remit half of its gross earnings to the National Treasury and the other half to agencies like the Office of the President and Philippine Sports Commission.

"This simply means a stockholder in Pagcor would not earn anything unless the law is amended. This is the same reason why we were not able to push through with the bond issue for Pagcor before," Bañares said.

The Investment Houses Association of the Philippines earlier proposed to the Department of Finance that 40 percent of Pagcor be sold to the public so that the government could raise at least P50 billion and bridge its widening budget deficit.

Bañares said a similar proposal was sent to former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu, but it had to be turned down because it would require an amendment of the law that created Pagcor.

"After its remittance to the government, Pagcor is left with earnings that could only be used for operating expenses and debt service nor interest payments is not allocated for," he said.

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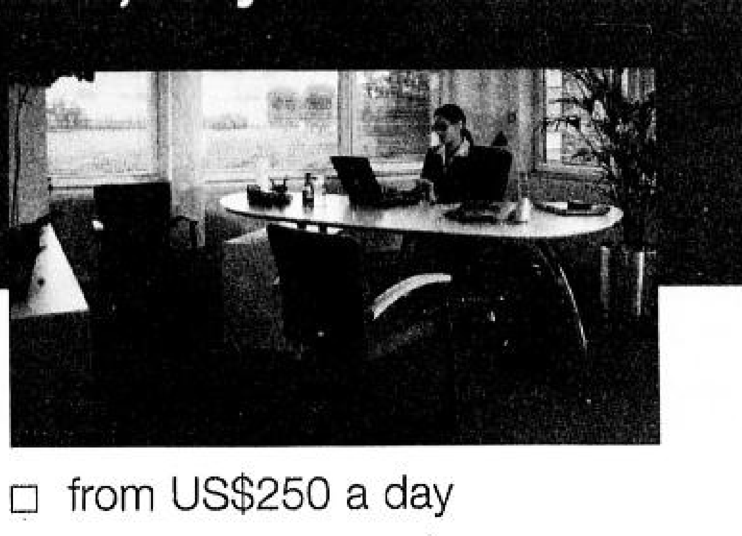

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Weird solution

COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin

CITIBANK country manager Catherine Weir, whose husband was the subject of the "Weird host" item that appeared in this column Friday, is seeking advice from her circle of local corporate heavy-hitters on how to handle what arguably is the biggest PR crisis ever to hit her otherwise charmed career.

According to the grapevine, Weir has even asked for a list of PR crisis consultants who could help her and the American bank overcome the barrage of negative publicity arising from that unfortunate dinner incident between her husband and The CompanY.

Lest the PR sharks devour her with "facilitation" and other expenses, perhaps Ms Weir should take a non-litigious, common-sense, and least-cost approach to this issue—that is, talk it over with the other party.

The Weirs, regardless of who is at fault, should meet with The CompanY, perhaps buy them dinner and drinks, apologize for the unfortunate social gaffe, and promise to hire the band back in the next round of Citibank functions to show the sensitive locals that what had started well actually ended well.

As to The CompanY, it makes good tactical sense to stop publicly flailing the husband; he, after all, has already suffered public humiliation for whatever private social crime he may have committed.

And to The CompanY supporters, please stop using the Magellan-Lapu-Lapu anecdote; no territory or national sovereignty is at stake here, only pride and prejudice.

Volatile partnership

PHILCOMSAT director Honorio Poblador III, who has regained political vigor ever since his Ateneo classmate Mike Arroyo transferred to Malacañang, has circulated an e-mail to friends asking for a 13-0 vote in favor of the People Power Coalition.

Nothing wrong with that, really, except that his stinging message against the Erap candidates also named Juan Ponce Enrile among them.

Poblador did not tell his e-mail correspondents that JPE happens to be his partner in the sequestered telecom firm and that he and JPE nominee/daughter, Katrina, served in the so-called Jaime Dichaves slate for the Philcomsat board.

And speaking of the senator, a particular type of political ad of the Cagayan solon is proving to be literally a powder keg these long, hot days.

We are referring to Enrile's smiling, benign visage (an oxymoron to martial law victims) and that of his Senate colleague, Juan Flavier, featured in a "Juan on Juan" ad pasted on every box of Royal Match, a match company owned by Enrile.

The non-safety match sticks in the box are apparently so packed tight that a case had started smoldering afternoon of March 29 while stacked on the shelf of the Cash and Carry supermarket.

An eyewitness, Sandy Hontiveros, said alert supermarket personnel isolated the smoking package before it could do further damage.

Aventajado in context

THE LONG Island home of Estrada Flagship Projects Adviser Robert Aventajado is now the latest subject of the text brigade, insinuating that the alleged Hampton house had been surreptitiously acquired during the Erap heyday.

We have not seen nor spoken to Aventajado since the impeachment days, but what we know is that the Long Island house was acquired in the late Marcos years, from profits derived from the car plates Aventajado supplied the Land Transportation Office with a little help from then Gen. Fabian Ver.

Heard through the grapevine

AMBASSADOR Alfonso Yuchengco and PLDT president Manuel V. Pangilinan are scheduled to meet today to iron out whatever residual claim the taipan may have on the telephone company.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

GSIS plans to issue ₱40B in asset-backed securities

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE pension fund Government Service Insurance System is set to issue up to P40 billion worth of asset-backed securities (ABS) to improve its liquidity as well as boost the local capital market.

GSIS president Winston Garcia announced during a forum with the Association of Securities Analysts of the Philippines that the maiden offering of the institution's ABS would be launched in July in the form of P5 billion worth of bonds with a five-year maturity.

"GSIS intends to have an active role in the development of the country's secondary financial markets through the securitization of its receivables under some of its own loan program. A successful GSIS securitization program will mean improved financial liquidity and solvency for the system," Garcia said.

The GSIS chief said he believed that the bond float would be attractive to investors because of the high-grade receivables that will constitute the pool of assets backing up these borrowings.

Garcia noted that the GSIS' salary loan program, ranging from one- to five-year loans, could boast a 95-percent collection efficiency rate and zero rate of default.

The salary loan program, whose receivables have reached P50 billion, earns 12 to 14 percent interest rate for GSIS or higher than the yield from the Treasury bill rate. Of the entire portfolio, Garcia said P30 billion to P40 billion would be used to securitize the future bond issuance.

"Hopefully we'll be able to launch the first tranche by July as soon as we finalize the concept of this securitization. These securities are envisioned to be listed with the SEC and traded in the secondary market," he said.

Garcia noted that the GSIS bonds would be risk-free because of the attached sovereign guarantee. For its part, he said he would like to ensure that GSIS would remain as a potent institutional investor in the country.

Securitization is the process of distributing risk by aggregating debt instruments in a pool, then issuing new securities backed by the pool.

Asset-backed securities refer to bonds or notes backed by a loan paper or accounts receivable originated by banks, credit card companies or other providers or credit and then "enhanced" by a bank's letter of credit or by an insurance coverage provided by an institution other than the issuer. Typically, the originator of the loan or accounts receivable paper sells it to a specially created trust, which repackages it as securities which are then underwritten by brokerage firms and re-offered to the public.

Only assets which are profitable are usually attractive for securitization. For instance, the government was earlier considering to raise funds by securitizing the future earnings of profitable casino monopoly Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. This strategy will allow the government to get future earnings of Pagcor upfront which it could use for its present needs.

COUNTRY SHARES
As of April 04, 2001

	BUYING	SELLING
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB A/B*	1,950 000	2,150 000*
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	800,000	800,000
CAPITOL HILLS GOLF CLUB	115,000	
CELEBRITY SPORTS	210,000	215,000
CLUB FILIPINO		250 000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	450 000	500,000*/700,000*
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	280 000	290,000/350,000*/450,000**
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	400 000	405,000/525,000*
MANILA POLO CLUB	3,200 000	
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	825,000/900,000*	850 000
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	600,000***	300,000/425,000*
PUERTO AZUL	130 000	150 000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS	230 000	250,000
RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB A/B*	240 000	280,000/420,000*
TAGAYTAY H-LANDS COUNTRY CLUB/GOLF*	485,000/1,100,000*	490,000/1,250,000*
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	870 000	890 000
VALLEY GOLF	330 000	350,000
VALLE VERDE	175,000	195 000
WACK WACK	8,500 000	10.5M

Japanese firm to invest ₱431M for RP expansion

SMK Electronics (Philippines) Inc. is pumping in P431 million to expand its operations in the Philippines for the production of touch panel glass used extensively in computer products and gadgets.

The Japanese-owned manufacturer is putting up its second plant at the Clark Premiere Industrial Park in Pampanga. It will be bigger than its factory at the First Industrial City in Bulacan where it churns out remote controllers, multi-function switches and keyboards.

SMK has obtained the endorsement from several state agencies such as the Philippine Economic Zone Authority and private organizations such as the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries of the Philippines to push its bid to get pioneer incentives from the Board of Investments.

SMK claimed that it was eligible for incentives because it would be the first to produce touch panel glass in the country.

The touch panel display is used for ATM machines, point-of-sales (POS) machines, and private digital assistance (PDA) gadgets to facilitate communication between the machine and the operator.

SMK is planning to produce 2.197 million units of touch panel glass at customer specifications every year. The company will export all its output.

SMK has started construction of the project in June last year and it expects to start commercial operations within a year. Based on a recent inspection made by the BOI, the plant is already 90 percent complete and 40 percent "of the equipment are installed.

The main raw materials to be used by SMK would be imported from Japan. The company is expected to create 690 new jobs.

Stocks end up

(From page B1)

focused on technicals and ignored fundamentals such as the weak peso, with players picking up stocks when the 1,430 immediate support in the main index was not breached.

The 33-share main index advanced 13.21 points, or 0.92 percent, to end at 1,452.36 points.

"It's still mainly technical, we have been trying to establish a base at 1,430. . . There is some buying support at that level," said Gonzalo Bongolan, research head of PCCI Securities and Brokers.

"There is no change in the fundamentals, there are even new negatives like the weak peso and the spike in interest rates," he said.

Value traded in the stock market fell to P292.18 million from the previous P326.12 million. Gainers outnumbered losers, 36 to 24.

The central bank said the peso's weakness was temporary and the currency should begin to correct, with the peso moving largely in sympathy with regional currencies.

Traders said the market would remain lethargic as the Holy Week holiday approaches next week.

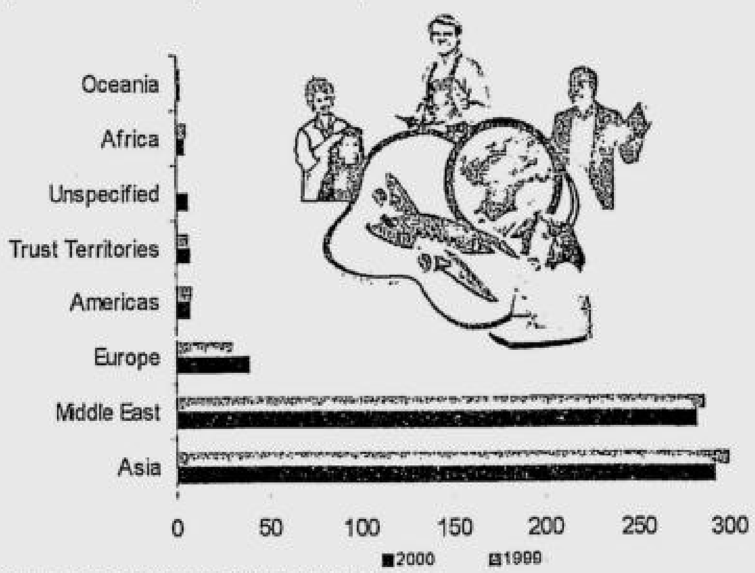
"A lot of investors are sidelined, they are reluctant to make a call because any positioning right now is like a call on the outcome of the May (congressional) elections," said Vincent Lazatin, fund manager of Worldwide Investment Management Co. of the Philippines. *Reuters*

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Overseas Filipino Workers

(1999 to 2000, in thousands)



Source: Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

Landbased overseas Filipino workers slightly increased by 0.5 percent last year to 643,304 from 640,331 in 1999. The biggest increase was in Europe at 28 percent with 39,296. But this was offset by the decrease of 15.7 percent in the Americas. Moreover, there was a decrease in Asia and the Middle East of 2.5 percent and 1.3 percent, respectively. Despite this, Asia and the Middle East still accommodated most of the OFWs last year accounting for 45.4 percent and 44 percent of the total, respectively.

Armin P. Adina, PDI Research

AL AMANAH BANK

Lone bidder offers ₱450M

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A CONSORTIUM led by Malaysian investors has offered to pump in P450 million for a controlling minority stake in Al Amanah Islamic Investment Bank.

The Malaysian consortium led by InterGlobal Consultant was the lone participant in an auction sponsored by the Privatization Management Office, which had expected to generate as much as P1 billion from the bidding.

PMO department manager Victor Bacungan said the Malaysian group only made an offer to buy 4.593 million "A" shares for P100 each. The PMO also offered for sale four million "C" shares of Al Amanah.

Bacungan said the Malaysian group reckoned that it only needed to buy 46 percent to take control of the bank.

The Malaysian investor's bid will be reviewed by the PMO and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. The government can negotiate with the lone bidder considering that this was the third time that the bank's shares were auctioned off.

Bacungan said only P5 million of the offered price would be remitted to the government (representing the 50,000 "A" shares held directly by PMO) with the balance to be used for the recapitalization of Al Amanah.

He said the unsold "C" shares, representing 40 percent of the bank, would be put on the auction block anew. The remaining 15 percent (in "B" shares) would be offered for sale to small local investors.

Al Amanah has nine branches all of which are in Mindanao but its network is not fully operational because of its limited capital. Al Amanah is the only bank authorized to perform banking, financing and investment operations and to establish and participate in agricultural, commercial and industrial ventures based on the Islamic banking system.

Unlike regular banks which charge interest on loans and pay the same on deposits, Islamic banks operate under a joint-venture type of arrangement wherein the bank, borrowers and depositors are partners sharing both the risks and profits on investments made.

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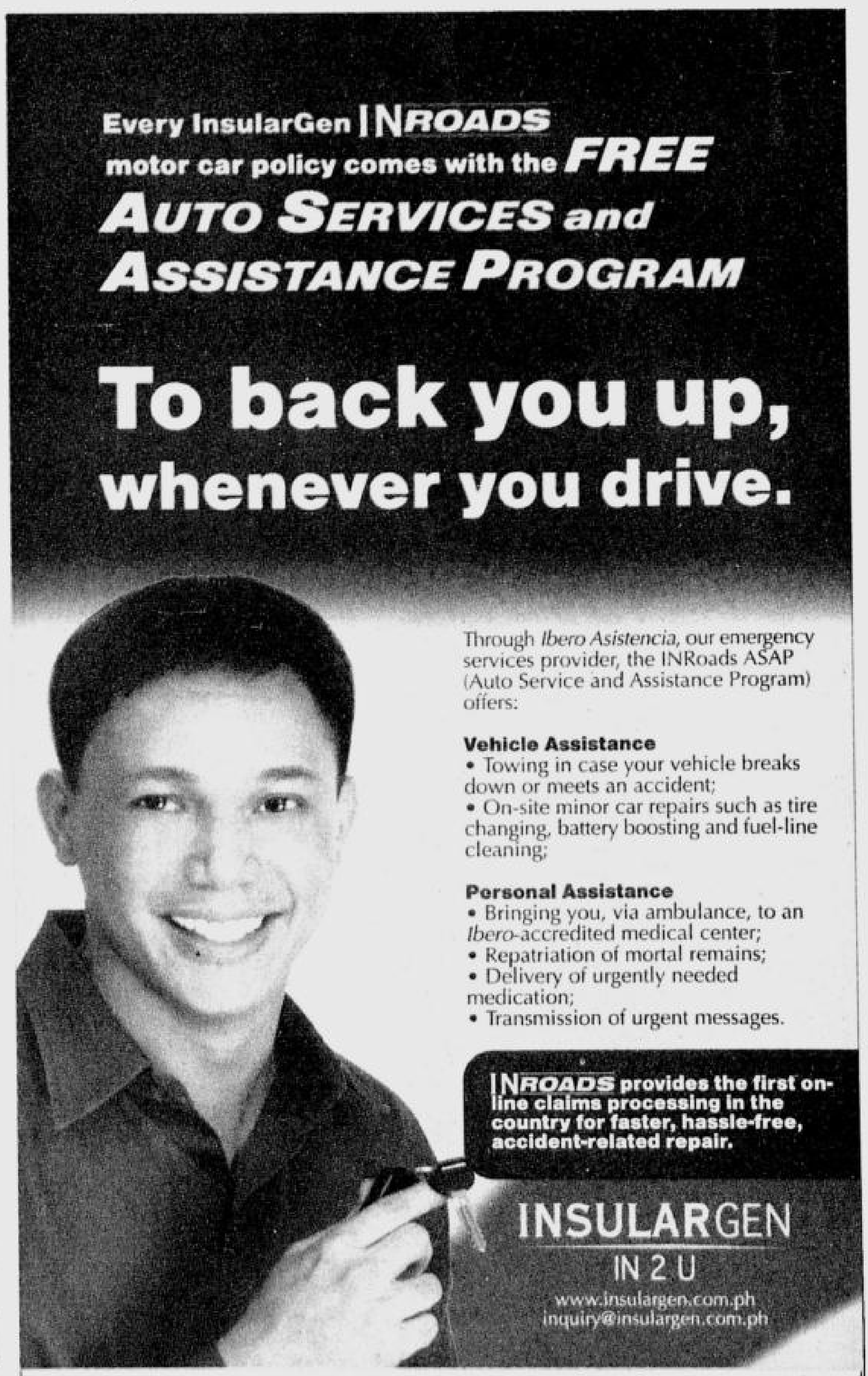
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SkyCable, Home sign merger; market share seen hitting 60%

By Anthony O. Alcantara

LOPEZ-OWNED Sky Vision Corp. and Home Cable Inc. of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. yesterday signed a memorandum of agreement to merge.

During the signing ceremony yesterday, PLDT president Manuel V. Pangilinan said the merged companies would have a valuation of P14.5 billion and a market share of approximately 60 percent.

"The driving factors behind the merger of SkyCable and Home Cable were the substantial capital resources required for expanding and upgrading both networks together with rising operating costs," Pangilinan said in a statement.

He said "the combination strengthens cable TV as an alternative converged platform for delivering data, voice and video to the home."

Eugenio Lopez III, chair and chief executive officer of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., said the merger "will result in a more efficient cable company that will lift service levels and raise Filipino cable operations to world-class standards" and "improve deployment of capital resources."

However, the merger is still subject to due diligence and other conditions such as the necessary regulatory approvals.

A holding company will be formed by Home Cable Inc., which is controlled by MediaQuest (a subsidiary of PLDT's beneficial trust fund) and Central CATV Inc. and Pilipino Cable Corp. (SkyCable), which is controlled by the Benpres Group.

The new holding company will initially be owned equally by Home Cable and SkyCable.

"In addition, excess convertible notes of the new holding company given to Benpres in exchange for its additional shares in Sky will be offered to a strategic investor, which is envisaged to provide added value to the merged operation," the statement said.

The two cable TV companies started exploratory talks on the possibility of a merger last year. Aside from the need for substantial capital resources, expenses for programming of content have also increased in the past years as a result of the depreciation of the peso.

"The merger of SkyCable and Home Cable is expected to spur the development of cable TV in the Philippines, rationalize infrastructure development, lower programming costs and provide richer content and a wider range of programming choices for viewers," PLDT said in the statement.

COKE, PURE FOODS

SMC defends acquisitions

SAN Miguel Corp. yesterday disputed a report alleging that Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo has filed a petition to restrain San Miguel from pushing through with the buyback of Coca Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. and the acquisition of Pure Foods Corp.

"The suit filed yesterday focuses only on the government's representation in San Miguel consisting of five directors out of 15," said SMC president and chief operating officer Francisco C. Eizmendi Jr.

Eizmendi added that, "It would indeed be most unfortunate and with adverse consequences not only on San Miguel, but to the overall business environment, if the government should intervene in this purely private corporate transaction."

The company clarified that the solicitor general petitioned the Supreme Court to issue a ruling to San Miguel not to recognize the five directors nominated by the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) under the previous administration and duly elected by the stockholders during the annual stockholders' meeting last year.

The petition does not question the validity of the Pure Foods and CCBPI transactions nor does it ask that the courts restrain San Miguel from proceeding with the transactions.

"All three transactions were thoroughly evaluated by independent legal and financial advisers, deemed fair value and duly approved by the boards of the companies involved," Eizmendi added.

Among the independent financial and legal advisers working on the acquisitions are ABN Amro, Morgan Stanley, MacQuarie, Lehman Brothers, SyCip Salazar Gatmaitan, Freehills, Clayton Utz, and Allen, Allen and Helmsley.

San Miguel announced last month that it signed a definitive agreement with The Coca-Cola Co. to jointly acquire CCBPI from Coca-Cola Amatil in a transaction valued at $1.1 billion. The company's subsidiary, La Tondeña Distillers Inc., subsequently announced that it had sold its water and juice businesses to The Coca-Cola Co. and Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. for $141 million.

"The CCBPI acquisition is very advantageous to San Miguel because it is essentially a non-cash share-swap transaction," Eizmendi said. "The Coke transaction has been in the works since last year and was discussed during previous board meetings. The new representatives of GSIS and SSS voted along with the board to proceed to negotiate with CCA and TCCC under defined transaction parameters."

Prior to these developments, San Miguel and Ayala Corp. announced that they have agreed in principle to conclude negotiations for the purchase of Pure Foods by the second quarter of 2001.

Acquisitions of businesses with strategic fit with its core categories, strong brands and high growth potential are a vital component of San Miguel's growth strategy, Eizmendi said.

The acquisition of CCBPI and the consolidation of San Miguel's non-alcoholic business with the company's carbonated beverage segment further bolsters San Miguel's leadership in the total beverage market while the acquisition of Pure Foods strengthens San Miguel's position as market leader in the country's fast growing food industry.

The CCBPI and Pure Foods acquisitions will provide an immediate boost to San Miguel's already strong profit and build the company's revenue base, Eizmendi said. The company reported revenue of P88.7 billion and net income of P7.5 billion in 2000.

Eizmendi said San Miguel's legal counsel is currently studying the petition and will file a response in due time.

Globe stands pat on rate structure

AYALA-OWNED Globe Telecom is not inclined to give a portion of its airtime charge or increase the revenue share of rural fixed-line phone companies for calls made from a landline subscriber to a cellular phone subscriber.

Rodolfo Salalima, Globe Telecom senior vice president for corporate and regulatory affairs, yesterday said the increase in rates being sought by fixed-line operators would impact negatively on the company.

"It should not be taken from CMTS (cellular mobile telephone system) rates. They should not disturb the CMTS rates. What they can do is apply for their own rates at the NTC (National Telecommunications Commission)," he said.

In a meeting last week with fixed-line and cellular phone companies, the NTC ordered the two parties to come up with an alternative revenue-sharing scheme to address the dispute within one month.

Fixed-line companies or local exchange carriers in the provinces claimed that they carried the full credit risk as collectors for calls made from their subscribers to the subscribers of cellular phone companies.

At present, LECs get a 30-percent share, or P1.32 per minute, of the total toll revenue of P4.40 per minute. The airtime charge of cell phone companies that range from P12 to P14 per minute all go to the cellular phone companies.

LECs therefore get only 10 percent of the revenues from calls made to cell phone subscribers from landline subscribers. About 14 percent goes to the inter-exchange carrier, or the backbone provider that connects the calls between two networks, and 76 percent to the cellular phone company.

Salalima, however, said the airtime charge was basically the NTC-approved access charge to a cellular phone network. He said this airtime charge was very much part of a cellular phone company's business plan.

In a separate interview, Rogelio V. Quevedo, legal head of Smart Communications Inc., said they had no position yet since negotiations were still ongoing.

"We are considering the best way to resolve this. The telecommunications industry depends on the interaction between carriers so that everybody will be viable," he said.

Disclosures

SAN Miguel Corp. announced the appointment of senior vice president and general counsel Francis Jardeleza as corporate secretary, succeeding Justice Jose Feria who retired.

* * *

EBECOM Holdings Inc. will increase its authorized capital stock from P10 million to P400 million. The par value of its share shall also change from P0.01 to P1 per share.

* * *

PILIPINO Telephone Corp. clarified that it has yet to receive from the Securities and Exchange Commission a formal written notice of approval of the company's request for rationalization of the filing fee for its application for exemption from registration of the new convertible preferred shares to be issued to its creditors in line with its debt-restructuring plan.

* * *

STOCKHOLDERS of **GLOBE Telecom** approved the proposed increase in the company's authorized capital stock from P11.25 billion to P12.25 billion.

* * *

THE LISTING of an additional 6.4 million common shares of **Jollibee Corp.** brings total shares listed under the company's tandem stock purchase and option plan to 7.2 million. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Tuesday, April 3, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69	69.5	69	69	112,000
China Banking Corp.	600	600	600	600	200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	52.5	52.5	52	52	57,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	217	219	214	215	40,890
Philippine National Bank	46.5	47.5	46	47.5	19,100
Phil. Savings Bank	29.5	30	29.5	30	14,000
Security Bank Corp.	26	26	19.25	19.25	30,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	27	27.5	27	27.5	21,100
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	250	250	250	250	500
Manulife Financial Corp.	1240	1245	1240	1245	5,180
Sun Life Financial Serv.	915	925	915	925	4,270
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	43	43.5	42.5	43	22,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.5	3,030,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	650	660	650	660	170
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	40,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.45	3.45	22,000
Piltel	0.51	0.53	0.51	0.53	510,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	700	720	700	710	118,310
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.042	0.044	0.042	0.043	66,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	42	44	42	43.5	45,800
Manila Electric Co. B	53	56.5	53	56	480,400
Petron Corp.	1.6	1.62	1.6	1.62	1,385,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	2,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.02	1.08	1.02	1.08	1,589,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	20,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	320,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	5,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	10,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	8,067,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.75	12	11.75	12	68,800
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	29.5	30	29.5	30	182,500
Pancake House Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	53,000
Pure Foods Corp. A	105	105	105	105	1,000
RFM Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.12	1.12	582,000
San Miguel Corp. A	46	46.5	45.5	46.5	44,000
San Miguel Corp. B	49	49.5	48.5	49.5	23,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.2	2,174,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	8,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.75	12	2,700
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.8	0.8	70,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	62,000,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.24	2.32	2.24	2.3	3,448,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	240,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	110,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	21.5	22	21.5	22	14,300
Global Equities Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	2,030,000
Ionics Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	106,300
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.28	2,864,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.75	0.76	0.71	0.73	2,660,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.48	3,260,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.51	1,150,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	240,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	60,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	5	5	5	5	11,000
Music Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	128,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.91	0.94	0.91	0.93	2,550,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0875	0.0875	0.08	0.08	5,900,000
Prime Gaming Mgmt.Corp.	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	1,074,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	20,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	11.75	12	11.75	12	4,600
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	3,310,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.47	0.49	2,340,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp	0.6	0.6	0.51	0.51	600,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
Abs-Cbn Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5	46,700
Ayala Corp. Pref.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	117,000
Equitable Pci Bank-War	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	83,000
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	655	655	655	655	360
Jollibee Warrants	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	28,800
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	20,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	11,900
Waterfront Phils-Warrant	0.018	0.022	0.018	0.022	700,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.6	5.4	5.6	2,960,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	210,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	1,110,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	830,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.9	1.96	1.9	1.94	3,108,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	70,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.0775	0.08	0.0775	0.08	300,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.6	6.3	6.6	2,983,000
Universal Rightfield Prop	0.105	0.105	0.1	0.105	4,200,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	70,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.17	270,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	10,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	10,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	97,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	1,280,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.025	2,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	25,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	3,000,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	5,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	100,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	304,340	32,586,985.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	200,886,040	215,149,930.00
PRO	15,771,000	43,234,860.00
Mining	108,630,000	793,450.00
OIL	35,300,000	245,350.00
GRAND TOTALS :	360,891,380	292,010,575.00

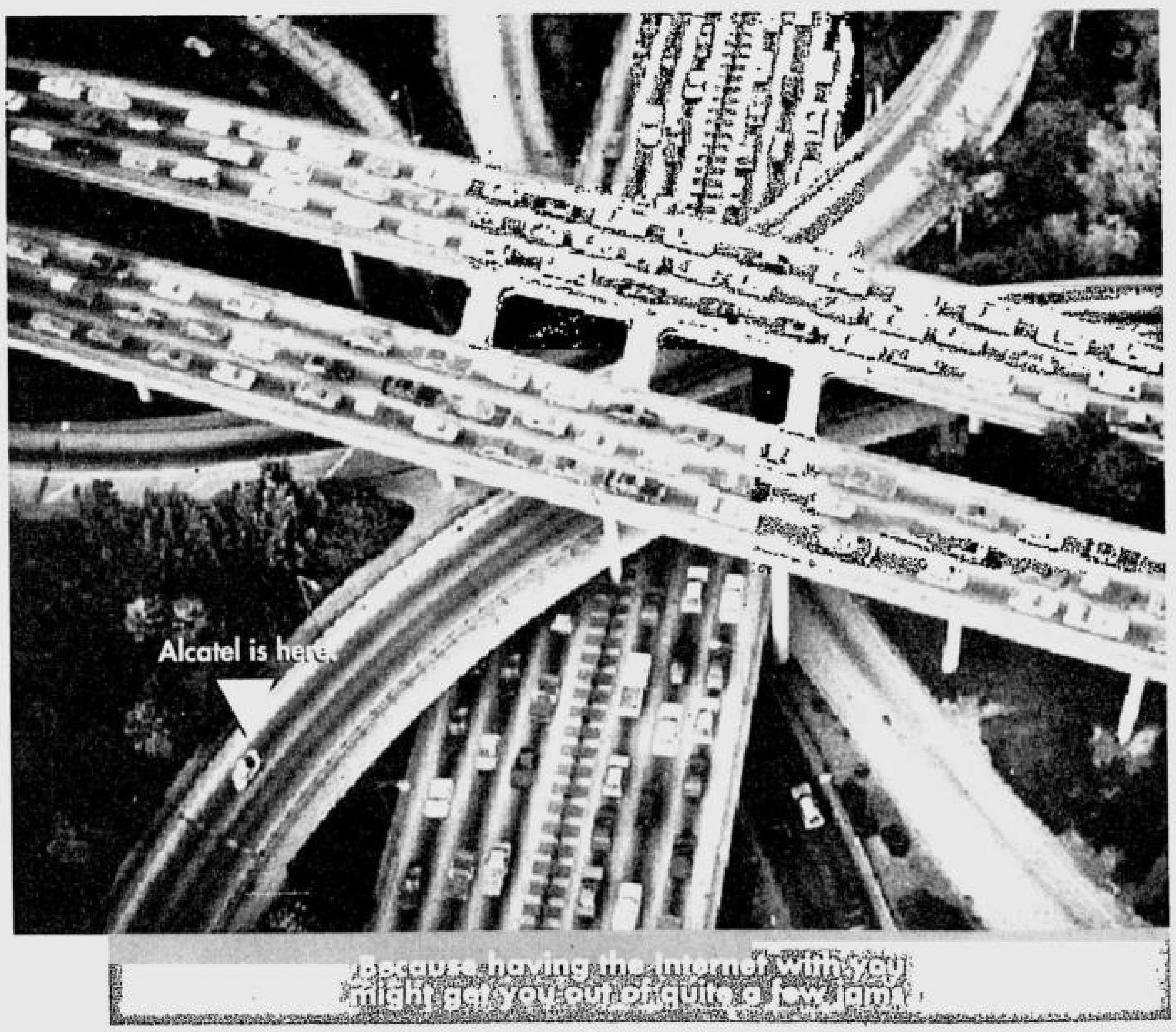
	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	599.40	UP 0.40
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,960.13	UP 5.96
PRO	554.02	UP 23.37
Mining	1,118.61	DOWN 14.04
OIL	1.58	DOWN 0.03
All Shares Index	728.80	UP 2.48
Composite	1,452.26	UP 13.21

NO. OF ADVANCES: 36; NO. OF DECLINES: 24; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 36; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 96; NO. OF TRADES: 1,790

CURRENCIES

"Apr. 3, 2001"

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.136622	1.000000	49.7170
Japan	Yen	0.008976	0.007897	0.3926
United Kingdom	Pound	1.612639	1.418800	70.5385
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.145760	0.128240	6.3757
Switzerland	Franc	0.655189	0.576435	28.6586
Canada	Dollar	0.719153	0.632711	31.4565
Singapore	Dollar	0.626411	0.551116	27.3998
Australia	Dollar	0.550130	0.484004	24.0632
Bahrain	Dinar	3.015073	2.652661	131.8823
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.303075	0.266645	13.2568
Brunei	Dollar	0.627968	0.552486	27.4679
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000109	0.000096	0.0048
Thailand	Baht	0.025191	0.022163	1.1019
UAE	Dirham	0.309461	0.272264	13.5361
Korea	Won	0.000842	0.000741	0.0368
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.879800	43.7410
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.449835	22.3644
France	Franc	0.152450	0.134125	6.6683
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.399236	19.8488
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.063938	3.1788
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.021810	1.0843
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000454	0.0226
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.147972	7.3567
Portugal	Escudo	0.004987	0.004388	0.2182
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005288	0.2629
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024790	0.02181	1.0843
Ireland	Punt	1.269739	1.117116	55.5397



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RFM to focus on Cosmos, Selecta expansion this year

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE RFM group will heavily invest on its refreshment businesses with some P1.7 billion earmarked this year for Cosmos Bottling Corp. and Selecta Foods Corp.

RFM president and CEO Jose Concepcion III said the company believed that its business would thrive by focusing on its refreshment products such as soft drinks, ice cream and non-carbonated beverages.

Of the amount, P1.4 billion will be used to expand the capacity of Cosmos in anticipation of higher demand.

RFM last year consolidated all its beverage businesses under Cosmos to save costs. This called for the transfer of its milk and juice businesses from Selecta to Cosmos.

"Our soft drinks business is doing very well. Cosmos is growing at a rate of 20 to 25 percent yearly. It focuses on the C, D and E markets because it is not only of good quality but very affordable too," Concepcion said.

Cosmos has 12 existing facilities in Manila, Pampanga, Bulacan and Pangasinan. It posted a 31-percent growth in net income last year to P683 million from P522 million in the previous year. This was attributed to the increase in the company's sales volume.

RFM Corp.'s consolidated profit in 2000 rose by nearly seven-fold as declining finance charges offset slow sales. Boosted by a 73-percent drop in financial charges, the company's net income hit P96 million, compared to only P14 million in 1999.

In the meantime, Concepcion said RFM has been looking for a strategic investor for its meat processing unit, Swift Foods Corp.

Concepcion said the expected takeover by San Miguel Corp. of the Ayala Group's majority stake in Pure Foods Corp. "will not be a major threat to us."

This, he said, showed the consolidation of the industry. Concepcion said RFM was also open to potential investors who would put more money into the company.

No new loans for RP, says World Bank exec

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE WORLD Bank yesterday said the Philippines was in danger of not getting new loans from foreign donors this year unless it shows a big improvement on its utilization of overseas development assistance (ODA) funds.

Vinay Bhargava, country director of World Bank, said it made no sense for donors to talk about new loans when the projects being funded by existing ODA funds were suffering from delays. This, he said, would only penalize the government in terms of the commitment fees it has to pay.

The Philippines discussed with its foreign donors yesterday the status of various foreign-assisted projects. Government officials also updated the donor community on how the Macapagal administration was planning to improve the economy this year.

A pledging session between Philippine representatives and the donors, called the Consultative Group Meeting, will be held latter this year.

The government pays three-fourths of one percent in commitment fees for $3 billion worth of delayed ODA-funded projects. This means that the state had to pay more than P1 billion in commitment fees yearly for the unutilized loans.

"It makes sense to increase utilization first before aiming for new loans. We have to see how these projects can be fast-tracked. We are not discussing for any new loans at present, "said Bhargava.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said that of the P32 billion counterpart funding needed to implement ODA projects this year, only P28 billion has been provided for in the budget.

"We will make sure that we will do better next year by increasing our counterpart budget to P60 billion or more than double of this year's budget," Boncodin said.

The budget secretary said the ODA fund utilization rate last year was only at 65 percent. She said the new government wants to improve this rate to at least 80 percent this year.

"We recognize that ODA-financed projects provide tremendous boost to our infrastructure program. We have to make sure that ODA-funded projects can be implemented without delay," said Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo.

Last year, foreign creditors had pledged about $2.6 billion in fresh loans to the Philippines to finance development projects nationwide.

Last year's pledges were $2 billion lower than the $4.6 billion committed in the previous year.

Oil prices seen to drop this month

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CONSUMER and Oil Price Watch chair Raul T. Concepcion yesterday said local oil prices could go down by about 20 to 26 centavos per liter this month.

Concepcion said in a press briefing that there would be no oil price increase in April and, should the peso stabilize at 48.75 to the dollar, the country could expect a price reduction of 20 to 26 centavos per liter. This, he said, would likely take effect on the third week of the month.

"The price cut in April should be 40 centavos per liter. After deducting the supposed increase in March of 14 centavos, we still have a reserve balance of 26 centavos," he said.

Concepcion noted that the decision of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to cut production by a million barrels per day did not result in an increase in crude prices.

"In fact, the price of Dubai crude dropped by $1 dollar (per barrel) to $22.82, which is below the Opec benchmark of between $24.50 and $25 per barrel," he said.

In an earlier briefing, Concepcion said that "in the case of a reserve balance, the normal thing do to was to roll back prices."

Energy Secretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho, for his part, stressed that the industry is in a free market. Reacting to calls for a rollback, he said the government could not just order a price rollback as if the industry was still regulated.

He said that in a regulated environment, the government determines how much returns the oil firms can have on their investments, and that if prices move "(there is either) a rollback or a price hike."

"In a deregulated industry, that concept goes away," the secretary said.

He said that if the oil companies thought they could have more money by not having a rollback, they would try to do so. The same way that they would suspend price increases as long as they could even when prices increased to keep their shares of the market and their customers happy.

The former investment banker said the decision on whether to roll back prices should be made by the oil companies independently.

UNIONBANK
OF THE PHILIPPINES
NOTICE TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS

March 26, 2001

Dear Stockholders:

Please be informed that during the meeting of the Board of Directors of UnionBank of the Philippines ("UBP") held last March 23, 2001, the Board approved the fixing of record date for stockholders entitled to vote at the Annual Stockholders Meeting of the Bank scheduled on June 1, 2001, Friday, to be on **April 6, 2001**.

Closing of books will be from April 10, 2001 to April 30, 2001 to enable the Stock and Transfer Agent to prepare and validate stockholders entitled to vote.

For your information. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) ATTY. FE B. MACALINO
Corporate Secretary

GMA allots ₱472M for capex

GMA Network Inc. has set aside P472 million in capital expenditure budget this year which will be used for the acquisition of new equipment and upgrading of its facilities.

GMA Network chair/president and CEO Felipe L. Gozon said the company has appropriated the amount for capital expenditures to support its migration to digital broadcasting, enhance GMA's production capability and complete the GMA Network Center.

One of GMA's priorities is the installation of the digital satellite uplink system that will enhance the network's news gathering capability. EVP and COO Gilberto R. Duavit Jr. said new equipment would be acquired in time for GMA's election coverage. These include two additional Electronic News Gathering (ENG) vans, additional cameras, vehicles, editing equipment and graphic machines.

GMA' capex also will also re-equip a good portion of GMA's creative/merchandising division's production and post-production facilities. With the new facilities, post-production capacity will dramatically increase.

SVP for the Television Group Roberto V. Barreiro added that the acquisition of new equipment would improve GMA's news gathering capacity by about 40 percent. The upgrading of existing facilities will allow GMA to expand its entertainment content production capacity and will allow the processing of contents for international cable distribution. "A threefold increase in in-house post-production capability is also expected," Duavit said.

Portion of this year's capex will be used for the commissioning of GMA's Studio 2.

Gozon said that the capex program would allow GMA to raise its production and programming capability to world-class standards. "This will prepare the company to face increasing competition and to regain its No. 1 position in the industry," he added.

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Asia growth to slow in 2001 but no new crisis–ADB

GROSS domestic product growth in developing Asian economies would be slower next year, but there was no likelihood of a recurrence of the 1997-98 regional financial crisis, the head of the Asian Development Bank said yesterday.

ADB president Tadao Chino said in an interview that average GDP growth in Asian economies would slip to 5 percent this year from over 7 percent in 2000, but should recover to 6 percent in 2002.

"Although growth is slowing after a faster-than-expected recovery in 2000, I think the developing countries in the region are now in a stronger position to absorb external and internal shocks," Chino said.

The slowdown this year, he said, reflected the sluggishness of the US economy and the moderation of the boom in the technology sector.

The ADB defines developing Asia as all countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including four central Asian nations, but excluding Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Afghanistan and North Korea.

The slowdown, Chino said, would be most marked in the four newly industrialized economies—Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan—which had grown by an average of 8.4 percent in 2000 on the back of the strong US economy and the technology boom.

This growth would slow to 4 percent in 2001 although it should recover to 6 percent in 2002, he said.

Southeast Asian economies, including Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines, should grow an average 4 percent this year against 5.1 percent in 2000 and then 5 percent in 2002, he said.

"The region can now sustain growth," Chino said. "We do not foresee a recurrence of the Asian crisis."

The reasons for his optimism, he said, included healthier balance of payments and foreign exchange reserves, less short-term debt, more flexible foreign exchange systems, an increase in intra-regional trade, accomplishment of significant financial reform and evidence of rising wages and employment opportunities.

"There is still much to be done but still the situation is much improved compared to two years ago," Chino said.

This improved economic climate in Asia coincided with the ADB's transformation from a multilateral financial institution into a long-term development agency with special emphasis on poverty alleviation, he said.

"We are a development bank," Chino said. "Our basic role is to assist in long-term development. We are giving loans for long-term development and necessary structural reforms."

The ADB provided some $6.66 billion in emergency loans to Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea in 1997 and 1998 but Chino said: "In the case of the Asian financial crisis, there was a need for short-term liquidity. The IMF is supposed to take care of these needs, but the IMF alone was not enough. Therefore at that time, the ADB and the World Bank decided to cooperate with the IMF to assist these countries.

"The Asian countries have been improving. We don't foresee any recurrence of the financial crisis and we will not be forced to give big amounts of program loan support. We will not have to do such a thing again, I hope."

He said the ADB planned to lend some $6 billion to its developing member countries in 2001, up from $5 billion in 2000. Forty percent of loans made to public sector institutions would be specifically for poverty alleviation projects.

Poverty alleviation projects are defined as those where the incidence of poverty in beneficiaries is significantly higher than the national average. *Reuters*

Malaysia forecasts 7.5% annual growth

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad predicted yesterday that Malaysia's economy would grow by about 7.5 percent a year until 2010.

The Malaysian leader gave the forecast in a 10-year social and economic plan announced in Parliament and also predicted that per capita income would double to nearly 23,610 ringgit ($6,213).

Mahathir said Malaysia's major source of growth would come from advances in technology and production processes, fueled by growth in both domestic and foreign investments.

Sustaining rapid economic growth "will hinge on our ability to strengthen economic resilience and competitiveness," Mahathir said. "The development of the knowledge-based economy is expected to provide a platform to improve Malaysia's productivity."

The plan, part of Mahathir's goal to turn his Southeast Asian nation into a fully developed country by 2020, will maintain long-standing policy to shift greater ownership of the economy from the ethnic Chinese minority to Malay Muslims, the largest ethnic group.

Singapore revising GDP growth forecast

SINGAPORE—The Monetary Authority of Singapore said yesterday a slowdown in the US economy and the global electronics industry had prompted the city state to revise its 5- to 7-percent growth target for 2001.

MAS, Singapore's central bank, also said it would review its monetary policy in the middle of the year.

Economists have foreseen tougher conditions this year compared with last year, when Singapore's trade-driven economy surprised on the upside by growing 9.9 percent on the back of buoyant exports of electronics to Asia and the United States.

"The government is currently revising the 5- to 7-percent GDP (gross domestic product) growth forecast for this year," the central bank said in its quarterly bulletin.

"The Ministry of Trade and Industry will be releasing the revised forecast soon."

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said last week that growth would be at 5 percent, the lowest end of the official forecast.

A Reuters poll of 10 research houses in March showed an average forecast of 5.3 percent this year, down from another in December projecting 6.6 percent.

"The downturn in the US economy and weaker global electronics demand will affect growth in the manufacturing sector, which would, in turn, spill over to the other services sectors, especially the transport and communications and commerce sectors," MAS said.

The United States and Japan are the city state's key markets—particularly for electronics that make up 60 percent of its exports.

Singapore's manufacturing output rose 13.3 percent year on year in February due to a lower base last year when the Lunar New Year holiday fell in that month.

But combined manufacturing growth for the first two months of this year was just 0.4 percent.

The recent depreciation of the Singapore dollar spurred speculation the central bank might shift its stance from a tightening to a neutral bias to boost exports, but MAS said last week it had not changed in its monetary policy.

"The MAS will also monitor closely external developments and review the monetary policy stance in the middle of the year," the bulletin said.

While inflation may rise slightly this year, imported inflation will be subdued due to a decline in wholesale price inflation in most of Singapore's trading partners as well as easing world oil prices, MAS said.

The spillover effect of last year's oil price shock was likely to push inflation in early 2001 to slightly under 2.0 percent before moderating to 1.0-1.5 percent for the rest of the year, it said.

"It is still expected to remain within the 1-2 percent range," said MAS, which has forecast 2001 inflation at under 2 percent after a 1.3-percent rise in 2000. *Reuters*

IMF, central bankers play rates tug-of-war

BERLIN—International Monetary Fund chief Horst Koehler on Monday called for a euro-zone interest rate cut to boost growth amid signs of a European slowdown, but European central bankers stuck to their "wait and see" policy.

"An ECB rate cut would undoubtedly be helpful for the European economy," Koehler said. He warned the IMF was likely to cut its European 2001 growth rate forecast to 2.5 percent from the 3.4 percent previously forecast.

Downplaying fears of a global recession, Koehler pointed to the United States as a model of decisiveness.

"The US has, through aggressive interest rate cuts, correctly demonstrated decisiveness and, if need be, has further room for maneuver," Koehler said in a speech to parliamentarians in Berlin.

But leading European central bankers and policymakers stoutly defended the ECB's "wait-and-see" policy, insisting on the autonomy of ECB policy from the response of US authorities to developments in their economy.

Euro Group president Didier Reynders said he was surprised by calls from the IMF and other international agencies for cuts, saying some of the people who were urging reductions also insisted on the independence of central banks.

"It's surprising to see an international institution like the IMF or the OECD say something about interest rates and about monetary policy from an independent central bank," Reynders, who heads the informal group of euro zone finance ministers, said in an interview with Reuters.

"They are (also) asking to maintain an independent central bank and they are speaking about monetary policy of central banks," he said.

Juergen Stark, vice president of Germany's Bundesbank, said the ECB was pursuing a strategy geared to European conditions and was not "sailing in the wake" of the US Federal Reserve.

"Up to the present, it (the ECB) has pursued a policy of 'steady as she goes'," he said in the text of a speech distributed to the media in Frankfurt.

"Hectic responses by central banks transmit themselves to the markets and increase volatility," he added.

Stark does not have a say in ECB monetary policy, but advises Bundesbank president Ernst Welteke, who is member of the central bank's policymaking council. *Reuters*

US firms to hire fewer IT workers this year

WASHINGTON—US companies expect to create 900,000 new information technology jobs this year—44 percent fewer than last year because of the slowing economy, according to an industry survey.

Companies appear ready to rein in hiring plans and are being cautious in the uncertain economy, according to the study, released Monday by the Information Technology Association of America.

Last year, the study found that companies expected to create 1.6 million new information technology jobs.

"The downsizing in the US economy has undoubtedly affected the demand for IT workers this year," said association president Harris Miller. "Skilled technology workers—still a highly desirable commodity to IT and non-IT companies—are facing more cautious hiring practices than the 'irrational exuberance' that some say described 2000."

While demand has diminished, some need for new talent still exists. Of the 900,000 new workers companies expect to hire, 425,000 information technology positions will go unfilled because of a lack of qualified applicants, the study says.

"Our 2001 numbers suggest that hiring has by no means halted for IT workers," Miller said. "Rather, demand still far exceeds supply in this market."

The association estimates that about 10.4 million people work in information technology-related jobs.

Technical support workers remain most in demand, and those jobs are expected to be a fourth of all new positions created in the next year. *AP*

Hong Kong tycoon admits doing wrong

HONG KONG—Richard Li, the boss of Hong Kong telecoms group PCCW, has admitted he had "done wrong" by not correcting company publicity material claiming he had a degree from Stanford University, local media reported yesterday.

Li, chair of Pacific Century CyberWorks, admitted late Monday that he failed to correct the mistaken references to him being a graduate although he had abandoned his studies nine months before finishing the course and gone to work for an investment bank in Toronto.

"Over the past eight to nine years, there were incorrect reports but I did not correct them," Li was quoted by the South China Morning Post as saying.

"I saw them but I did not correct them. If I could do it again, then I would absolutely correct it.

"Personally, this is a good lesson to me. In future, if there is any incorrect information, even if it only appears in the media, we will try our best to correct it no matter whether it is positive or negative," he said.

"I certainly think this is a case of negligence," he said.

Li had earlier confirmed a report that he had not finished his degree at the prestigious California establishment and asked his firm to act immediately to correct any inaccuracies in the publicity material.

The correction was made after a report in the International Herald Tribune cited three officials at Stanford as saying Li, son of tycoon Li Ka-shing, had not received a diploma.

Li pulled off one of the most remarkable business deals last year when he took advantage of PCCW's soaring share price to buy Hong Kong's dominant telephone operator, Hong Kong Telecom, from Britain's Cable and Wireless. *AFP*

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Daimler to buy Volvo's 3% stake in Mitsubishi

TOKYO—Auto giant DaimlerChrysler AG has agreed to buy Swedish truck manufacturer Volvo AB's 3.3-percent stake in Japan's Mitsubishi Motors Corp., a news report said yesterday.

The deal would raise the US-German carmaker's stake in the troubled Japanese company to 37 percent, surpassing the Mitsubishi group's 34-percent share, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said.

DaimlerChrysler was expected to announce the stock purchase at its shareholders meeting on April 11, the business daily said.

As a result of the deal, DaimlerChrysler would become Mitsubishi's commercial vehicle business partner instead of Volvo, the daily said.

Mitsubishi Motors, undergoing a far-reaching restructuring led by DaimlerChrysler, declined to confirm the report.

"We are not in a position to comment because it is a matter between DaimlerChrysler and Volvo," the Japanese company said in a statement.

Volvo bought a 5-percent stake in Mitsubishi Motors in 1999. It had been expected to buy a 19.9-percent stake in a company that Mitsubishi planned to set up this year by spinning off its truck and bus operations.

DaimlerChrysler took a controlling 34 percent in the Japanese carmaker last October, diluting the Volvo stake to 3.3 percent.

Last month, Mitsubishi denied there was any plan to scrap its alliance with the Swedish truck maker.

With DaimlerChrysler and Volvo fierce rivals in the truck business, speculation had been rife that Mitsubishi could pull out of the plan to set up a joint commercial vehicle subsidiary with the Swedish group. *AFP*

Japanese policymakers race to produce economic package

TOKYO—Japanese policymakers raced against time yesterday to hammer out an economic package aimed at removing two long-standing obstacles to an economic recovery: banks' mountainous bad loans and stock market weakness.

The ruling coalition government is expected to finalize by Wednesday a package centering on measures to help banks dispose of their non-performing loans and a special fund to absorb sales of shares held by banks.

While the deadline was self-imposed and officials were reluctant to guarantee it would be met, at stake was the credibility of the political and financial leaders who were unable to pull the nation out of economic doldrums for a decade.

The country's benchmark Nikkei share price average, which shot up more than 3 percent yesterday on optimism about the economic package, risked a retreat toward last month's 16-year lows if no credible deal was reached.

Adding urgency to the debate, a key central bank survey Monday showed a worsening in business sentiment, prompting some economists to warn of a slide back into recession.

The debate within the government on the latest package appears to be seeking a balance between clearing up the banking system bad debts while avoiding the pain of radical reform.

Ironically, Japan's top financial regulator, generally viewed as a reformist, has voiced his reluctance to set definite numeric targets for bad-loan write-offs.

"Setting some sort of deadline is a consideration, but I do not think we can approach this issue by, for instance, saying they must be cut down to half in two years," Financial Services Agency Minister Hakuo Yanagisawa told a news conference.

Non-performing loans at Japanese banks were estimated at around 32 trillion yen ($253 billion) as of last September.

Worries that this sour debt could be storing up banking sector crisis have been hurting investor sentiment towards Japan, in turn weighing on Tokyo's fragile stock market.

Yanagisawa also urged caution on setting a limit to how many shares banks could hold, saying the government should first set a clear objective if it were to impose a specific ceiling.

"When it comes to regulating the amount of shareholdings, you have to decide what exactly you mean to achieve in terms of economic and financial effects. You need some sort of vision."

Japanese banks have traditionally bought shares of its clients to cement business ties.

They have been allowed to count part of unrealized profits on such holdings as capital, but the Tokyo market's steep fall has eroded those gains and raised doubts about their financial stability.

Japanese banks are estimated to be carrying shares in their clients worth as much as 150 percent of their own capital, and Yanagisawa says he agrees such an amount is excessive.

In contrast to Yanagisawa's reserved stance, Hidyuki Aizawa, a veteran politician in the dominant Liberal Democratic Party, said the government planned to limit banks' holdings in other companies' shares to 100 percent of their own capital. *Reuters*

StarHub forms $20-M Internet cable company

SINGAPORE—Nasdaq-listed Asia Global Crossing and Singapore telecommunications newcomer StarHub have formed a $20-million joint venture to provide high-speed Internet, voice and video communications.

StarHub Crossing, the new company, will connect customers in Singapore to more than 200 major cities in over 27 countries through a vast web of land and undersea cables, company officials said.

"StarHub Crossing gives customers competitive choice and new alternatives," Asia Global Crossing vice president Anthony Christie told reporters at a news conference.

Asia Global Crossing's largest shareholders include Bermuda-based Global Crossing, Japan's Softbank Corp. and US giant Microsoft Corp.

The new venture is part of Asia Global Crossing's plan to build a pan-Asian network by 2002 and gives StarHub access to private cables for the first time, according to company officials.

StarHub chief executive Terry Clontz said StarHub previously had to rely on buying "capacity" to send data and voice in cables controlled by the city-state's government-controlled Singapore Telecommunications.

"The keys to the kingdom have been controlled by one company and that's going to change," Clontz said of rival SingTel, which held a monopoly over Singapore's telecommunications industry until the government liberalized the sector last year.

StarHub Crossing is a 50-50 venture and is expected to generate an annual revenue of $100 million at the end of its fifth year of operation, according to John Poston, senior vice president of StarHub's international and wholesale division.

By 2002, Asia Global Crossing plans to link Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, the Philippines and Malaysia. It will also connect with China "as regulations permit," according to a company statement. *AP*

Big bank to hit small depositors with steep fees

HONG KONG—The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corp. said yesterday it would start imposing charges of HK$40 (US$5.13) per month for people with savings accounts containing less than HK$5,000.

Senior citizens and disabled people will be exempt from the charges that the bank, a subsidiary of HSBC Holdings plc, will levy as Hong Kong deregulates its deposit interest rates in July.

Rival bank Standard Chartered plc recently introduced new fees for small depositors.

HSBC will introduce a four-tier interest rate system that pays nothing on balances below HK$1,000 with maximum interest on balances above HK$10,000.

"While we will not push any customers away, we will reward those that give more of their business to us with higher interest and extended services," said Hongkong Bank's general manager, Raymond Or. *AP*

Lucent wins NTT next-gen dev't contract

TOKYO—Lucent Technologies' Softswitch has been selected for Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp.'s next-generation network development efforts.

This next-generation network proposed by Fujitsu to NTT is the latest success of the Fujitsu-Lucent strategic alliance announced in June 2000 and marks the second award from NTT.

As part of its pioneering efforts in next-generation network construction, NTT will trial a new multi-service control system—using Lucent's second-generation Softswitch—at the NTT Information Sharing Laboratory Group, NTT's research and development arm.

The trial, which will begin after delivery of the system in June 2001 and last for approximately six months, reflects the NTT Information Sharing Laboratory Group's continuing leadership in developing and deploying a next-generation network to support an array of Internet-based and multimedia services.

The carrier-grade second-generation Lucent Softswitch, introduced in January, builds on more than two years of trials and commercial achievements and is designed to meet the reliability, high performance and scalability demands of even the largest global carriers.

The Lucent Softswitch is a programmable platform that allows carriers to create and introduce new services quickly for IP and ATM networks through Lucent's "Full Circle" Application Program Interface.

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GLOBAL GROWTH

Economic outlook dim despite hopeful US

NEW YORK—The battered US industrial sector showed signs of turning around on Monday but a weak European purchasing manager's report and a sharp fall in a Bank of Japan survey signaled global growth was still slowing.

Raising hopes that the recession-hit US industry sector may be headed for a recovery, the US National Association of Purchasing Management reported its manufacturing index rose for the second straight month in March.

But in Europe, a slide in the Reuters Eurozone purchasing managers' index accelerated in March to its lowest reading in two years, while Japan's quarterly "tankan" business sentiment survey worsened for the first time in nine quarters.

"In the US, the manufacturing sector isn't going off a cliff the way it was in December and January, but it hasn't rebounded either. On top of the weaker-than-expected tankan and European PMI, the picture is not all that bright in general," said Jay Bryson, a global economist at First Union National Bank in Charlotte, NC.

Both the European and Japanese indicators fell by more than expected and could mean that a bounce, which analysts say is needed to avoid a world recession, may not arrive as quickly as previously hoped.

The data also provide fresh evidence of the US contamination, delivering a warning that industrial output in the euro zone could slip into negative territory and that Japan lies within sight of recession.

Economists hope that a rebound in the United States will revive world growth and help it stay in positive territory this year. But they warn that disappointment from the PMI and tankan surveys is a reminder that the risks to this view remain high.

"Uncertainty over a recovery in the second half of this year has not been eased by the data and in fact is increasing," said economist Jose Alzola of Schroder Salomon Smith Barney.

"The German performance continues to disappoint and doubts persist over the strength and timing of a US bounce," he said.

Industry turnaround

The NAPM reported its manufacturing index rose to 43.1 from 41.9 in February, surprising financial markets, which had been girding for a weak 41.4 reading, according to a Reuters poll.

A reading under 50 indicates the sector, which makes up one-fifth of the US economy, is shrinking.

"The overall picture is one of continued decline in manufacturing activity during the month of March," said Norbert Ore, chair of NAPM's business survey committee.

But Ore said the pace of decline in the industrial sector had slowed "significantly" and that manufacturing activity could begin to expand again in late summer.

The NAPM report showed foreign orders for US manufactured goods grew for the first time since September 2000, an encouraging development for a sector struggling with a strong dollar, which makes US goods expensive for overseas buyers.

Europe at 2-year low

Reuters' PMI for the 12-nation common currency bloc hit its lowest level since March 1999 at 51.2 last month from 52.5 in February. Economists had forecast a 51.8 reading.

Closely watched by the European Central Bank, which has held interest rates unchanged despite cuts in Japan and the United States, any reading above 50 signals continued growth.

But the deterioration was steeper than in the two previous surveys and individual country reports also highlighted the impact of slowing external demand on Italian and German exports.

Britain's PMI, meanwhile, slipped below the no-change market of 50 in March for the first time since October, falling to 49.7 from 52.2 in February.

The European data chime with a swing in the Bank of Japan's latest tankan survey to minus-five from plus-10 in December, versus a forecast result of zero, as the woes of US industry sapped sentiment among manufacturers worldwide.

The March tankan had been predicted in December to read plus-seven, illustrating the speed with which confidence has crumbled since January and explaining the Bank of Japan's return to a zero interest rate policy.

In Europe, where long-term growth trends are estimated by the ECB to lie between 2 and 2.5 percent, official forecasts remain for an almost 3-percent expansion this year.

But examples of how weaker external demand has hit the region's output are mounting, which are expected to weigh on ECB interest rate decisions later this month.

International Monetary Fund managing director Horst Koehler added his support for a cut in rates by the ECB and warned of a cut to the Fund's European 2001 growth rate forecast.

Koehler said the IMF saw 2001 growth in the euro economies of 2.5 percent compared with the 3.4 percent it had been forecasting. However, he played down fears of world recession, saying the IMF saw global growth this year of 3 percent. *Reuters*

SONY'S new Internet TV, airboard, is displayed at an electric shop in Tokyo. Looking a bit like a stylish etch-a-sketch, the airboard is a portable liquid-crystal-display TV set that can be toted around the house like a cordless phone. It's also part computer for reading and sending e-mail and looking at Internet home pages and, as a TV, it delivers beautiful, clear images. Airboard, which went on sale in Japan in December and is slated for the US market later this year, is for people who can't figure out computers. AP

Sony introduces portable Internet TV

TOKYO—Leave it to Sony Corp. to be different in targeting the computer-challenged.

Its take on the Internet-capable appliance, called the airboard, is what you might get mixing a cordless phone and a TV.

The airboard's big attraction is that you can tote it around the house, even crawl into bed with it, because it doesn't need to be plugged in. And while you cuddle up with your favorite TV program, you can also take care of e-mail or surf cyberdom.

The airboard went on sale in Japan in December, and Sony says a version is slated for the US market later this year. Sales plans for Europe and the rest of Asia are still undecided.

In its current incarnation, it's a bit like a designer dress—not very practical, but cool to own.

For one, the airboard's Internet functionality is limited. It is incapable of playing video from websites—though the e-mail works fine.

The airboard could be handy as a second, or third, Net device around the house—if you're willing to pay 128,000 yen ($1,020).

As a television, airboard delivers beautiful, clear images on its 10.4-inch liquid crystal display screen. Subscreens can be reduced to about one-sixth the main screen and relegated to a corner for users who wish to make TV-watching a secondary endeavor.

The 1.5-kilogram airboard links wirelessly with a 1-kilogram stand equipped with a 56-kilobit-per-second modem for a telephone connection to the Internet.

Internet appliances have been received with less than great enthusiasm in the United States, largely due to design inadequacies.

But airboard appears to be scoring decent success in gadget-loving Japan, where 30 million people use cell phones to exchange e-mail and surf the Net.

Sony says it's making nearly 20,000 airboards a month.

As for the competition in Japan, Hitachi has something similar but aimed at a different customer.

Its Flora-ie 55mi looks a lot like the airboard, also featuring a touch-panel keyboard, but is more business tool than home appliance.

Flora-ie 55mi became available in Japan late last year by bulk order to companies for about 100,000 yen ($800). It can be linked to the Net through mobile phones, regular phone lines and wireless local area networks. Unlike airboard, there's no wireless connection between the device and a stand. *AP*

Warnings dominate US Q1 reports

PALO ALTO, California—Corporate America closed the books on the first quarter of 2001 last week, but it could not so easily forget all the business it lost during the first three months of the year, which came back Monday in the form of widespread earnings warnings.

At least 20 companies warned Monday that their first quarter results would fall short of expectations, making the day one of the worst news days following one of the worst business periods in recent memory.

In fact, as a growing list of companies lower their first quarter sales and earnings numbers, data on these so-called earnings warnings are proving to be yet another measure of how swiftly and severely the economy is softening.

Some numbers to consider: A total of 694 companies had issued first quarter warnings as of last Friday. Since many companies are not able to assess the quarter until the books are closed, more warnings are expected this week. By all accounts, the final number of first quarter earnings warnings will easily beat the old record of 794 set in the fourth quarter of 2000. And that total was significantly greater than the prior record of some 554 warnings set in the fourth quarter of 1998.

Forecasts were accurate

"We're in free-fall," said Chuck Hill, director of research at Thomson Financial/First Call, which closely monitors company earnings estimates. "If anything, the rate of free-fall may have slightly accelerated."

In another sign of how quickly business conditions have soured, some of the companies warn about soft earnings in recent weeks had issued statements just months ago, insisting that their business was on track.

Semiconductor equipment maker Novellus Systems Inc., for example, said in mid-January that it had not seen any of the order cancellations plaguing some of its competitors. Just six weeks later, it cut first quarter revenue forecasts and said visibility on business prospects for the rest of the year was limited.

That companies try in the first place to predict how much money they will make in a given quarter is a relatively new phenomenon, fueled in part by laws that protect them from being sued for inaccurate forecasts, provided that they make certain disclaimers.

Still, the large number of earnings misses seen currently comes on the heels of a prosperous period in which most companies, particularly high-tech companies, would either surpass their earnings estimates or hit them on the nose.

Michael Darby, professor of money and financial markets at the Anderson Graduate School of Management at the University of California Los Angeles, said the boom years of the late 1990s left an unrealistic picture of how easy it was to predict earnings.

1970s recession

"I would say more troubling than the earnings misses today is that companies tended to hit their targets so exactly in the past. It suggests they were managing their earnings, choosing whether to include certain business, or hold it until the next quarter," said Darby. *Reuters*

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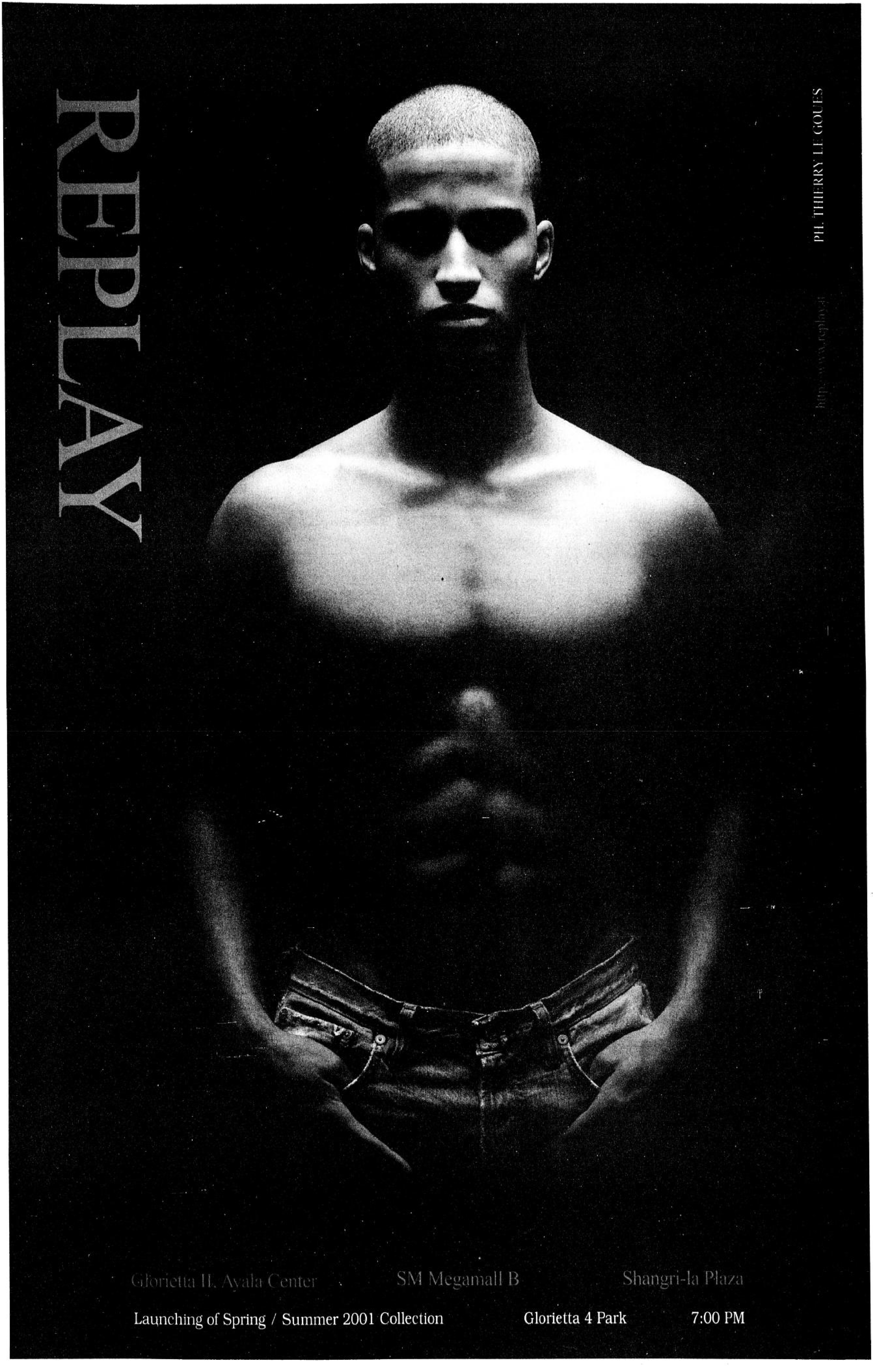
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PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

MARA PAWNSHOP I, II, III, IV and Comembo Branch of Makati City. Auction Sale on **April 11, 2001, Wed.** at 10:30, 11:30, 1:30, 12:30 and 8:30 in the morning and on the afternoon. Respectively, Nov. 10-Dec. 11, 2000.
Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer.

MI MARA PAWNSHOP of 251 Quirino Ave., Baclaran Paranaque, M.M. Auction Sale on **April 11, 2001, Wed.** at 4:00 in the afternoon. Respectively, **Nov. 10-Dec. 11, 2000.**
Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Wilfredo R. Villegas has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per doc #5 page #1 book #VIII series of 2001 before notary public Eddie Fernandez of the city of Mandaluyong
(PDI-April. 4, 11, 18, 2001)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that Stock Certificate for Ayala Alabang Country Club under the name of Mr. Ramon K. Katigbak was declared lost. If found, pls. call tel. nos. 812-6409 & 812-6436
(PDI-April 4 & 11, 2001)

PERSONAL

NOVENA TO THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND SAINT JUDE

May the most Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified throughout the whole world now and forever. Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, helper for the helpless, pray for us.

Say nine times a day for nine days. Prayer will be answered by the eighth day, it has never failed.

Thank you very much, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude, for favor granted.

THANK YOU HOLY SPIRIT

National Power Corporation

March 30, 2001

INVITATION TO BID

The NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION (NPC) invites all interested suppliers to participate in the bidding for the Supply and Delivery of 70,000 MT +/-10% Plus an NPC's Option for an Additional 40,000 MT +/-10% Steaming Coal for Naga-Cebu Coal Fired Thermal Power Plants.

Tender documents shall be available for issuance upon payment of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) at the Office of the Bids and Contracts Management Department, 2nd Floor, Building 2, NPC-OBC, Diliman, Quezon City beginning **April 10, 2001**.

Those who are not yet accredited with NPC will have to apply for accreditation first before they could be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Accreditation forms are available for issuance upon payment of P500.00 also at the above mentioned office. Accomplished accreditation forms should be submitted not later than **April 24, 2001** to enable possible participation in the tender.

Pre-bid conference and will be on **April 16, 2001** at 10:00 A.M. at the Kañao Room, Solarium, Bldg. 1, NPC-OBC, Diliman, Quezon City respectively. Deadline for submission of technical and price proposals is not later than 10:00 A.M. on **May 10, 2001** also at the Kañao Room.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO T. CORPUZ**
VP/Head Genco 6 & Chairman
Fuel Procurement Committee

(PDI--April 4 & 7, 2001)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE - MANILA

March 30, 2001
Date

INVITATION TO BID
SHORE CRANES FOR SALE

The PPA Port District Office Manila's Disposal Committee invites interested parties to purchase by way of sealed bids on "AS IS, WHERE IS" basis, the following properties/items:

DESCRIPTION	FLOOR PRICE	:	LOCATION
Liebherr Shore Crane No. 1	P11,386,275		MICT
Liebherr Shore Crane No. 2	11,386,275		MICT

Above floor prices do not include expenses incidental to removal of the crane/s which shall be for the account of the winning bidder.

SCHEDULE

1. Issuance of Bid Forms - April 2-25, 2001
2. Pre-Bid Conference - April 30, 2001
3. Submission of Sealed Bids - Not later than 2:00 PM of May 14, 2001
4. Opening of Sealed Bids - May 14, 2001 - 2:00 PM
5. Venue - Conference Room, 3rd Floor, PDO Manila Bldg., South Harbor, Port Area, Manila.

Bid Forms, Terms of Reference and detailed list/description of abovementioned properties shall be issued upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00).

PPA-PDO Manila reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereof, to waive any defect in the bids received and to accept bid or bids which is or are advantageous to the Philippine Ports Authority.

For further details, including bid forms, rules and regulations, please contact the PBAC Secretariat, Tel # 527-76-01 loc. 215 or FAX # 527-47-04.

(Sgd.) **LEOPOLDO F. BUNGUBUNG**
Port District Manager / Chairman,
PDO-Manila Disposal Committee

(PDI – March 30, April 2 & 4, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
SENATE

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

(Reference: Admin Order No. 001, s. 1988)

The SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES is hereby inviting interested contractors/suppliers to bid for the following:

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	PRE-BIDDING CONFERENCE	PUBLIC BIDDING
1.	Four (4) sets Conference & Discussion System consisting of Four (4) Central Power & Control Units, Four (4) Chairman's Microphone units. Sixty-eight (68) Delegate's Microphone units and Four (4) units Microphone Extension Cables	24 April 2001, 10:00 AM	26 April 2001, 10:00 AM
2.	Twenty (20) units Semi-Automatic Pistol, 9MM	24 April 2001, 11:00 AM	26 April 2001, 11:00 AM

All interested contractors/suppliers may secure prequalification requirements from the PBAC Secretariat Office located at Rm. 401, 4/F, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City on 5-11 April 2001. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished prequalification documents shall be on 18 April 2001. Incomplete prequalification requirements will not be entertained. All applicants shall be notified on the result of the evaluation of prequalification documents submitted.

Bidders shall be required to post a bidder's bond equivalent to five percent (5%) of the total bid price or Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) whichever is higher in the form of cash, manager's check, cashier's check or surety bond issued by the GSIS. All surety bonds must be callable on demand.

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CONFISCATE THE BID BOND SHOULD THE WINNING BIDDER REFUSE TO ACCEPT THEIR AWARD, AND THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS OR ANY PART THEREOF, WAIVE ANY DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN AND ACCEPT AN OFFER MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARNEL JOSE S. BAÑAS**
Chairman, Prequalification, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI--April 4, 5 & 6, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, Metro Manila 3008
Tel. Nos. 372-5057, 372-5043
Fax Nos. 372-5048, 372-5042

INVITATION TO BID

The Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources, Department of Agriculture (DA-BFAR), invites qualified bidders/suppliers to participate in the bidding of the following item not later than 2:00 PM on April 18, 2001.

ITEM/S TO BID:

1	unit	Fax Machine
3	set	Computer with complete accessories, RIV#512 and 120, 575
5	units	Computer for upgrading
1	unit	Multimedia Projector
1	unit	Underwater camera
	-	Various laboratory supplies/materials, RIV#363, 364, 365, 366
	-	Various trawl gear accessories
	-	Various construction supplies and materials

Bid form together with complete specifications may be obtained from Property Section.

Interested bidders are required to submit the following requirements upon securing bidding forms: photo copies of Business License, Certificate of Registration/DTI, latest audited Financial Statement, latest Income Tax Return (original copies to be shown for authentication purposes).

This Office reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated by the PBAC is the most advantageous to the government. The PBAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, or does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.**
Director

(PDI -- Apr. 4, 2001)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE MANILA

March 30, 2001
Date

INVITATION TO BID

The PPA Port District Office Manila's Disposal Committee invites interested parties to purchase by way of sealed bids on "AS IS, WHERE IS" basis, the following properties/items:

DESCRIPTION	FLOOR PRICE	:	LOCATION
One (1) lot STU Spare Parts for various cargo handling equipment	P493,550	:	Container Van at Pier 13, South Harbor

SCHEDULE

1. Issuance of Bid Forms - April 2-25, 2001
2. Pre-Bid Conference - April 30, 2001
3. Submission of Sealed Bids - May 16, 2001
4. Opening of Sealed Bids - May 16, 2001 - 2:00 PM
5. Venue - Conference Room, 3rd Floor, PDO Manila Bldg.,
   South Harbor,
   Port Area, Manila.

Bid Forms, Terms of Reference and detailed list/description of abovementioned properties shall be issued upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00).

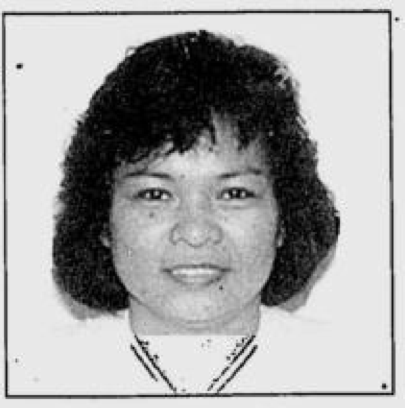
PPA-PDO Manila reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereof, to waive any defect in the bids received and to accept bid or bids which is or are advantageous to the Philippine Ports Authority.

For further details, including bid forms, rules and regulations, please contact the PBAC Secretariat, Tel # 527-76-01 loc. 215 or FAX # 527-47-04.

(Sgd.) **LEOPOLDO F. BUNGUBUNG**
Port District Manager / Chairman
PDO-Manila Disposal Committee

(PDI – March 30, April 2 & 4, 2001)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



Beatriz Magbitang

is no longer connected or employed with Allied Banking Corporation. Information on "QUALIFIED THEFT" has been filed against her before the Santiago City Regional Trial Court, Branch 35, docketed as Criminal Case No. 2945. A warrant for her arrest has been issued. Any transaction entered into with her will not be honored by the Bank. For any information as to her whereabouts, please call the:

CORPORATE SECURITY DEPARTMENT
Allied Banking Corporation, Allied Bank Center,
6754 Ayala Ave. Makati City at tel. nos.
(632) 816-1265; (632) 810-2464; (632) 816-3311 to 99
local 3204 or 3494 or get in touch with
Mr. Danilo Lao, Assistant Manager
ALLIED BANK SANTIAGO BRANCH
at tel. nos. (078) 682-8276; (078) 682-7187; (078) 682-7940

Any information provided shall be treated with strict confidentiality.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, Metro Manila 3008
Tel. Nos. 372-5057, 372-5043
Fax Nos. 372-5048, 372-5042

INVITATION TO BID

The Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources, Department of Agriculture (DA-BFAR), invites qualified bidders/suppliers to participate in the bidding of **"1 roll polyester rope and Catering Services of NMFDC Trainees for FY 2001"** not later than 2:00 PM on **April 19, 2001**.

For pre-qualification purposes, interested bidders shall submit the following documents not later than **April 10, 2001** to the BFAR PBAC Secretariat, Ground Floor, Arcadia Building, 860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City. (Original copies of the documents should be presented for authentication purposes).

1. SEC or DTI Registration Certificate
2. BIR VAT Registration Certificate and photocopy of PTR paid for the last quarter (October to December, 2000)
3. Clearance Certificate/Gate Pass issued by the Philippine Navy, Naval Base Command, Sangley Point, Cavite City as catering concessionaire or as proof of visit to the National Marine Fisheries Development Center Canteen
4. Mayor's Permit CY 2001
5. Sanitary Permit CY 2001
6. Photocopy of Business Plate No. issued by the City/Municipality
7. List of past and present clientele for the last two (2) years with telephone nos.

Only bidders with at least 2 years experience in catering services can participate.

Bidding documents will be made available only to pre-qualified bidder within **April 11 to 16, 2001** at the BFAR-PBAC Secretariat.

Submission of pre-qualification paper for catering services from **April 4** to **April 10, 2001**.

Pre-bid conference will be held at the BFAR Conference Room, Arcadia Building, 860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City on **April 11, 2001** at 2:00 PM.

Submission and opening of bid will be on **April 19, 2001** at 2:00 PM, BFAR Conference Room, Arcadia Building, 860 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City. Bid shall be accompanied by a bid security of three percent (3%) of the total bid price. The security may be in cash, cashier's or manager's check, GSIS bond or a surety bid callable on the demand issued by a surety or insurance company accredited by the office of the insurance commissioner of any combination thereof.

This Office reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated by the PBAC is the most advantageous to the government. The PBAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, or does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.**
Director

(PDI -- Apr. 4, 2001)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

Official Depository Bank of the Republic of the Philippines

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID FOR THE SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND ASSEMBLY OF THE FOLLOWING:

a. Contract Package No. 13: Four (4)-Drawer Lateral Files (Stand Alone) with Overhead File Cabinet, Four (4)-Drawer Lateral Files (Stand Alone) without Overhead Cabinet and Open File Shelves;
b. Contract Package No. 13A: Lateral Files (On Tracks with Fixed File Cabinet);
c. Contract Package No. 13B: File Cabinet for Maps and Index Cards; and
d. Contract Package No. 13C: File Compactors

All corporations registered with the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), with extensive experience in the supply, delivery and assembly of lateral files and compactors for office buildings are invited to apply for pre-qualification and bidding for Contract Package Nos. 13, 13A, 13B and 13C for the new LBP Headquarters Building in Malate, Manila with the following schedule:

Issuance of Pre-Qualification Form	Pre-qualification Conference	Issuance of Notices of Pre-qualification. Pre-disqualification after		Issuance of Notice of Pre-Qualification Pre-Disqualification	Issuance of Bid Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Bidding Date
April [illegible] to [illegible], 2001 @ 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM	April [illegible], 2001 @ 10:00 AM	a. Evaluation of Pre-qualification Documents & Brochures	May 04 2001	May 21, 2001	May 22 to 23, 2001 @ 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM	May 24, 2001 @ 10:30 AM	May 30, 2001 @ 10:00 AM
		b. Evaluation of [illegible] Brochures	May [illegible] 2001				
		c. Selection [illegible] for the display by Sub-Committee and Special Committee	May 2[illegible] 2001				

All interested Suppliers may obtain the Pre-qualification forms from the LBP Ad Hoc Group Office, c/o Project Management and Engineering Department (PMED), 2F LBP Bldg. III, 315 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. Makati City, upon payment of a non-refundable processing fee of P1,400.00.

After the pre-qualification conference, Suppliers shall be given four (4) calendar days to signify in writing their interest to join the pre-qualification process by accomplishing the proforma Letter of Intent (LOI) included in the pre-qualification forms issued earlier. Attendance to the pre-qualification conference is among the requirements for pre-qualification.

Duly accomplished Pre-qualification forms shall be submitted to and received at the above-stated office not later than April 24, 2001, 3:00 PM after which no documents will be accepted. All participating suppliers shall be notified in writing of the results of the pre-qualification.

Only pre-qualified suppliers may secure Bid Documents at the above-stated office/date upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00.

Pre-Qualification and Pre-Bid conferences will be held on the above-stated date and time at the FMGSG Conference Room, 2F, LBP Bldg. III, 315 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

Bidding shall be conducted using the two (2) envelope system (envelopes "A" & "B") to be submitted to and received not later than 10:00 AM on May 30, 2001 (the Bidding Date). Bidding shall be held at the FMGSG Conference Room, 2F, LBP Bldg. III, 315 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

LBP reserves the right to change the date of issuance of bid documents, pre-bid conference and bidding date. Due notice of changes shall however be communicated by LBP to pre-qualified bidders.

LBP likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense/loss that they may incur during the preparation of their bids, and to accept the bid that is most advantageous to the Bank.

GILDA E. PICO
CHAIRMAN,
SUB-COMMITTEE FOR LBP HO BLDG. PROJECT

(PDI -- April 4, 5 & 6, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
860 Quezon Ave., Quezon City, Metro Manila 3008
Tel. Nos. 372-50-57 • 372-50-43
Fax Nos. 372-50-48 • 372-50-42

INVITATION TO RE-BID

The Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources, Department of Agriculture (DA-BFAR), invites qualified bidders/suppliers to participate in the bidding of *"Various Aqua Feeds"*, item not later than 11:00 AM on **April 17, 2001**.

Bid from together with complete specifications may be obtained from Property Section.

Interested bidders are required to submit the following requirements upon securing bidding forms: photo copies of Business License, Certificate of Registration/DTI, latest audited Financial Statement, latest Income Tax Return (original copies to be shown for authentication purposes).

This Office reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated by the PBAC is the most advantageous to the government. The PBAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, or does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.**
Director

(PDI -- April 4, 2001)

Two forces unite against infectious diseases

Reckitt Benckiser, a recognized name in infection control, and the Philippine Pediatric Society, an organization acknowledged for its programs promoting child care, join forces to launch a program that aims to empower Filipino families against infectious diseases.

Today, April 4, at the Visayas Ballroom of the Westin Philippine Plaza, these two organizations present a lunch symposium on "Child Care through an Infection Control Program" by Donna J. Gaber, BA, MTc. Afterwards, there will be a launching of educational leaflets on infection prevention and control education program.

With Reckitt Benckiser's expertise on germ-control and the Philippine Pediatric Society's commitment to health and care in the family, the vision of Filipino communities thriving in a healthy, disease-free environment is closer to realization.

Reckitt Benckiser is the maker of Lysol, world-leader in disinfection.

Jollibee promo

Fastfood leader Jollibee has come up with an exciting promo that would make customers plan what time they would visit the store: the "Jolly Good Time" promo. The promo enables customers to experience their favorite Jollibee food products at discounted prices during select hours of the day. From 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and an hour before closing time, customers may order a double spaghetti special at P39 or a double french fries with double regular soft drink at P39. The promo runs until April 6 at Jollibee stores nationwide.

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HERMINIA BELTRAN REYES

April 23, 1921 - March 30, 2001

Widow of **Dr. Melanio M. Reyes**

We her loving children **Menchie** and **Alnor**, **Sonny** (†) and **Vida**, **Cecille** and **Bien**, **Ditas** and **Edgar**, **Joey** and **Marilou**, **Melanio Jr.** (†), **Desiree** and **Benjie**; sister **Panching**; grandchilden, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at 117 Banalo, Bacoor, Cavite.

Interment will be on April 5, 2001 at Bacoor Memorial Park after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at St. Michael Catholic Church.

CORAZON FERRER LUMAWIG

of Parañaque

(Former Asst. Superintendent of Public Schools and Papal Awardee)

Died in the Grace of our Lord on April 2, 2001
at the age of 86 and joins her beloved husband,
Capt. MAXIMO L. LUMAWIG

She is deeply missed by her children **Thess**, **Jolan** and **Joy**; sons-in-law **Virgil Soriano**, **Gene Diaz** (†), and **Dr. Adrian H. Buensalido**; daughter-in-law **Grace Tañedo**; grandchildren **Ginno** and **Myra**, **Eileen**, **Rita** and **Steven**, **Boozy** and **Caloy**, **Jomick**, **Jondi**, **Jason** and **Monique**; and great grandchildren, brothers and sisters **Jaime** (†) and **Bertie**, **Paz** and **Leopoldo Moral** (†), **Lydia** (†) and **Marcelo Santos** (†), **Juanito** and **Fely**, **Carmen** and **Eleuterio Adevoso** (†), **Simeon** (†) and **Adina**, **William** and **Linda**, **Hermilo** and **Emy**, **Flor** and **Arnulfo Cordero** (†), **Wally** and **Betty**, **Nerissa** and **Sonny de Veyra**.

Her remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Dr. A. Santos Avenue (Sucat Road), Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 7, 2001 at Manila Memorial Park after the 8:30 a.m. Mass at Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels.

23rd Death Anniversary
of the LATE

ESPERANZA LIMJAP Vda. de OSMEÑA

(1896-1978)

Masses will be offered at the following Churches on 04 April 2001:

St. John Bosco Parish Church, Pasay Rd., Makati City	6:00 a.m.
Santuario de San Antonio Parish, Forbes Park, Makati City	7:30 a.m.
Malate Catholic Church, Malate, Manila	6:00 p.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Church, Bel-Air Village, Makati City	6:30 p.m.
Basilica Minore of Immaculate Conception, Malolos, Bulacan	6:00 a.m.
Carmel Parish, Barasoain, Malolos, Bulacan	6:00 a.m.
Sta. Isabel Parish Church, Malolos, Bulacan	6:00 a.m.
Redemptorist Church, Cebu City	6:00 a.m.
Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral, Cebu City	6:30 a.m.
Basilica del Sto. Niño, Magallanes St., Cebu City	8:00 a.m.
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish, Capitol, Cebu City	5:30 p.m.
St. Therese Church, Lahug, Cebu City	6:00 p.m.
San Roque Parish Church, Wireless Mandaue City	6:00 p.m.
Sto. Rosario Parish, P. del Rosario St., Cebu City	7:00 p.m.

Readers are requested to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Beloved PAPA

"He showered us with much love, affection and care.
Now it is time for HIM to say goodbye."

ANDRES JAINGUE MARABUT

(October 11, 1914 - April 2, 2001)

of Basey, Samar
Retired Hearing Officer, Board of Transportation
Past Hermano Mayor of St. Michael the Archangel

His loving wife **TATING DELOVINO MARABUT**; children **LEA DELLA** and **ANTONIO ABIA**, **LUCHI** and **GABRIEL BOTIN JR.**, **NOEMI** and **CONDE LEO BELLOSILLO**, and **JEWEL** and **NOE BAGA**; grandchildren **RANDY** and **JO ANN**, **MIRABEL** and **NOEL**, **LOYD**, and **MARCO ANTONIO**, **LURIELE** and **MOISES**, **CRESTA**, and **GABRIEL III**, **MICHAEL RON**, **MARIANNE**, and **MYRAH**, and **NOEL**; great grandchildren **J.A.**, **BUDOY**, **YEYEY**, **YAYAY**, and **NENE**; brothers, sisters, in-laws, nephews, nieces, and other relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 7, 2001 at Himlayang Pilipino, Quezon City, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at La Funeraria Paz.

LYDIA REYES COLINA

of Noveleta, Cavite

Died in the Grace of our Lord on March 30, 2001 at the age of 78.

Her daughter **Helen**; son-in-law **Pol Quiambao**; and grandchildren **Malou** and **Francis** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at her residence at 237 San Rafael II, Noveleta, Cavite.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 7, 2001 at the Huling Himlayan, Noveleta, Cavite after the 3:00 PM Holy Mass at the Holy Cross Parish.

ENGR. EPIFANIO C. LUSTRE

April 7, 1933 - April 1, 2001
of Balagtas, Bulacan and Sikatuna Village, Q.C.

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on April 1, 2001 at the age of 68.
to join his parents Francisco & Hilaria Lustre

His loving wife Cynthia A. Tuason; sons Romulus and Remus, brothers Gerry (†), Emy (†), Tony; sister Remedios Santiago, brothers and sisters in-law, nephews, nieces, grandchildren and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the peaceful repose of his soul

His remains lie in state at the La Funeraria Paz, Chapel 4, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be held at the Himlayang Pilipino on Thursday, April 5, 2001 after the 9:00 A.M. Mass at the Parish of the Lord of Divine Mercy, cor. Madasalin & Maamo Sts., Sikatuna Village, Quezon City.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Parish of the Lord of Divine Mercy, for their various projects.

FISCAL EDUARDO "ED" PAZZIUAGAN, JR.

of Tuguegarao, Cagayan

Died in the Grace of our Lord on April 2, 2001 at the age of 47.

His bereaved wife **Cielo Morales**; children **Cheska** and **Nico**; mother **Apolonia Maramag**; brother, sisters and in-laws **Joji** and **Toni**, **Maritess** and **Tarny**, **Edgar** and **Maritess**, **Rita** and **Marlon**; and other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his son.

His body lies in state at the Pazziuagan residence in Tuguegarao, Cagayan.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 7, 2001 in Tuguegarao, Cagayan after the 2:00 PM Mass.

Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again.

2 Corinthians 5:4-5

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Sir Knight Cristeo P. Aquino

of the Pontifical Order of St. Sylvester

who peacefully joined his Creator on February 23, 2001

wish to thank all of you who, by way of your presence, prayers, thoughts, flowers and donations, offered us solace and comfort.

We also thank you for joining us in remembering him, who, in so many ways, have touched our lives forever. God bless you!

MESSAGE OF THANKS

The family of the late

Adelaida de la Cruz-Henson

of Angeles City

who joined our Lord and her Blessed Mother
March 26, 2001

wish to convey their sincerest and heartfelt gratitude to all those in countless ways condoled, helped, prayed with and comforted them in their hour of deep sorrow.

Thank you and God bless you all!

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.) **WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments**

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Tels 747-8599 • 747-8600
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Tel 732-0309 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu
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COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City
Tels. (082) 227-1201, 227-1258
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Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dagupan St., Manuguit, Manila
Tels 712-5102; 741-5125, 741-5133
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HOLY TRINITY MEMORIAL CHAPELS
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Are cell phones, e-mail boon or bane at work?

By Tita Datu Puangco

For the Anxious Person at Work

I AM a personnel manager in a medium-sized company. I believe in the wonders and miracles of modern technology. Our company president has asked me to come up with a policy on the use of cell phones and e-mail at work. We are grappling with the following issues: Does the use or availability of the cell phone at the workplace affect productivity? Should we allow the unlimited use of the Internet? How can we make sure that they are used for official business only? We are aware that we cannot prevent employees from using them but how can we ensure the sound use of these so that they don't distract employees? What is your experience in using these tools? Thank you in advance for your advice.

Wired World Advocate

Your letter is very timely. Recently, cell phone companies, together with the government, have initiated a move to eliminate the use of indecent and vile language in text messages. In fact, they have provided phone numbers that one can call to report abuses. For indeed, cell phones and the Net have become pervasive communication tools in our society today.

Proper use

And yes, they can be both beneficial or harmful depending on one's purposes and intent. We can see how inspirational and gospel sayings circulate through text or e-mail messages. They provide an uplifting and boosting effect. On the other hand, we can also witness the spread of defamatory language and dirty jokes that tend to destroy and put down people. It must have something to do with the immediacy and anonymity of the medium. What people may hesitate to say face to face, or on the phone due to basic courtesy, they do through text or e-mail messages.

Recently, a friend of mine undertook an experiment taking on an unknown text pal. The exchange lasted for days, mainly during office hours. She documented the loss of her productive time to be approximately an hour a day. She also noted how she got distracted and lost her concentration on the work at hand. Not to mention the daydreaming and the emotional rollercoaster she would experience as the conversation became more emotional and animated. Surely, while this was going on, she had no or low productivity.

So what we are saying is that the cell phone or the Net, both communications media, have to be used properly if they are to become productivity tools. We also agree that policies to set guidelines and standards may be necessary. These tools become most useful for business purposes if there is prior face-to-face communication between the two parties. If one uses them without an existing trust relationship, miscommunication can occur since two parties may be communicating with different intents, contexts and values.

Practices

Let me share with you some tips based on current practices. First, identify which functions in the organization would best benefit from the tools at hand. If a person is in sales or marketing, a cell phone would be indispensable to get his work done. In fact, in many companies, the cell phone bills for sales are considered company expense. In a manufacturing company engaged in electronic assembly, cell phones are banned in the production area since its presence can negatively impact productivity. Workers get to use these only during lunch and break times. For people in service jobs, cell phones are allowed in the workplace but they are put in silent mode so as not to disturb other people at work. This also ensures that people structure the time they spend replying to text messages.

Second, set guidelines as to the priority of communications media to use. If you are meeting face to face with a person, the person in front of you gets primary attention. If a landline phone and a cell phone ring at the same time, the landline call gets priority. Longer messages are taken up by landline phone and only brief messages requiring brief information with already a shared context may be taken through the cell phone. People are encouraged to put cell phones in silent mode during group meetings to eliminate distractions.

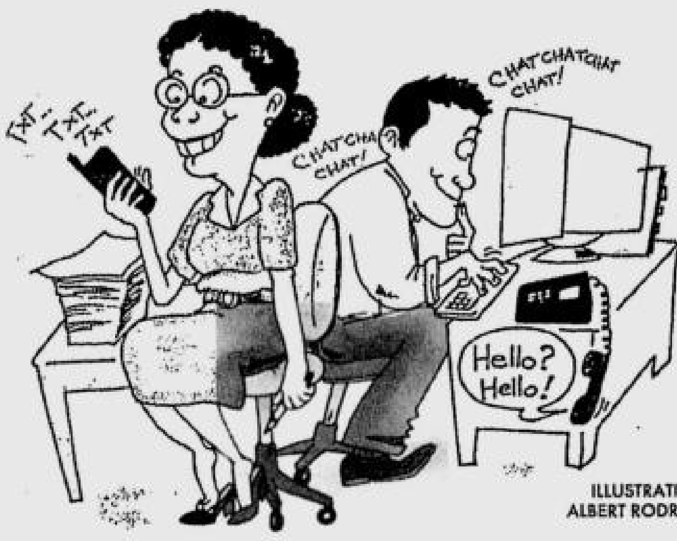
TXT. TXT. TXT
CHAT CHAT CHAT!
CHAT CHAT CHAT CHAT!
Hello? Hello!

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Internet use

Let us now move to the use of the Internet. Companies have discovered that they need to structure the use and access to the Internet. One company downloads all their email in the morning and everyone is required to answer them within the day, if needed. In some companies where the work is primarily e-commerce-based, the incoming mails become their task list for the next day.

Web users in the company are identified depending on their requirements for new and fast information. Those in research jobs or with tasks requiring innovation or programmers may be given free, full access to the Web. If their jobs are routinary, with solid physical outputs, they may not need access at all. Some people who need access to the Internet from time to time can be given controlled time since they can structure their information use.

If the use of e-mail is not regulated, then abuses can occur. In some companies, managers are swamped with as many as a hundred e-mail messages, because people furnish them copies of just about everything, even non-essentials. This may affect the manager since he may dread opening his inbox, thus delaying action on urgent matters. Then, some people become so cozy with the computer, they use the e-mail to communicate with the person in the next cubicle. Surely, e-mail can never substitute for face-to-face communication.

Netiquette

It also pays to issue guidelines on basic netiquette, the courtesy and etiquette for the use of the Internet in general and e-mail in particular. Doug Harper proposes, as the basic premise of netiquette, the golden rule, "That which thou findest hateful to receive, sendest thou not to others."

He summarizes the 10 Commandments of netiquette: "Thou shall include a clear and specific subject line. Thou shall edit any quoted text down to the minimum. Thou shall read thine own message thrice before sending it. Thou shall ponder how the recipients might react to thy message. Thou shall check spelling and grammar. Thou shall not curse, flame, spam or use all caps. Thou shall not forward any chain letter. Thou shall not use email for any illegal or unethical purpose. Thou shall, when in doubt, save thy message overnight and reread it in the light of dawn before pressing the send button."

Indeed, the time has come for policies to be set in place for these new communications media. But policies are not enough. People have to be oriented and educated on their use. In some instances when personal calls and Internet chats get in the way of the work, some coaching and counseling may be needed.

Let us make the new communications media work to achieve greater heights of productivity. We also recognize the personal benefit of using them to renew acquaintances and build relationships. Just make sure this is done sparingly or on off-work hours.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting, a full service management consulting firm which offers a helping hand to leaders, people and enterprises as they plan and implement learning and business solutions that address complex change towards sustainable growth. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail to ancillaedc@pacific.net.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*

There's more to life than time

RECIPES for LEARNING

By Moje Ramos-Aquino

THANKS to Dino Alberto Subingsubing for his reaction to our column about myths on time and I quote:

"Myth: There is only one kind of time.

"Experience: There is clock time and there is psychological time. This is where the great scientist and mystic Albert Einstein's theory of relativity comes into play.

"Given one minute, putting your hand on a hot stove makes the minute feel like an hour. Given one hour, sitting next to a pretty girl who is a good conversationalist makes the hour seem like a minute.

"The lesson for us working Joes is that we should put all our best efforts at whatever we are doing at the moment. Forget about time. If we really like our work and what we're doing in the here and now, time will no longer be an issue. Perhaps that's what eternity is about: the absence of time or myths about time."

So there, how well do you use your present time? Are you able to do what is important or are you mired in what is deemed urgent or convenient or what might be in the future or what could have been rectified in the past or are you just whiling away time? Then, as Dino says, you are conscious about time and not what you ought to do. You might be losing out on the best of life.

More to life

There is more to life than just watching the clock and marking time. Therefore, our first activity for our Workshop on Enjoying the Time of Your Life While Achieving Your Life Plans (WETYLWAYL—that's the new title of our workshop. It is more appropriate and suggestive of a positive, active life) is to record how we have been using our time.

Ready? On your worksheet, please use the example on this page and make your Time Log Form, one per day.

First, fill in the boxes for your Name, Date/Day, and Objectives. It is best that you always write down your objectives to remind you of the big picture, that these activities are not there just for keeping busy, but they are there to move towards your objectives, your goals and eventually your mission towards the path of your vision.

Second, log in your activities, time started and time finished. Identify the importance and necessity towards the achievement of your life plans of that activity on a scale of one to five.

Third, write your comments, e.g. "This took a long time because when I started the activity, I didn't have all the data I needed. I called up Accounting and I waited for 30 minutes for the figures that I needed. Also, in the middle of the activity, the phone rang and it was the boss asking for my comments."

24-hour log

Be sure to log all your activities on a 24-hour day basis. Do the log, line by line, row by row. Record every single thing that happened to you or that you did. Including quiet times like thinking or listening or reading.

Name		Date/Day	
Goals & Objectives			
Time	Activity	Importance & Necessity (Pls. circle appropriate number)	Comments (What did you achieve,. Next steps, etc)
5:00 a.m.	Wake up Gargle Prepare & eat breakfast	1 2 3 4 5	
5:30	Take a shower	1 2 3 4 5	
6:00		1 2 3 4 5	
6:30		1 2 3 4 5	
7:00		1 2 3 4 5	
7:30		1 2 3 4 5	
8:00		1 2 3 4 5	
8:30		1 2 3 4 5	
9:00		1 2 3 4 5	
9:30		1 2 3 4 5	
10:00		1 2 3 4 5	
10:30		1 2 3 4 5	
11:00		1 2 3 4 5	
11:30		1 2 3 4 5	
1200 nn		1 2 3 4 5	

Do a one-week Time Log. Next Wednesday, we will continue with this activity and we will analyze your use of time. Meanwhile, just fill in the form, don't do any analyzing.

Take care because we care. 13-0 *tayo, ha!*

I am so happy to know that our engineers have banded together to push for legislation and reforms in the engineering and related fields. Let's help the party list Philippine Technological Council (PTC). Their primary nominee is civil engineer/lawyer Primi Cal.

(Send feedback to moje.ramos@aquino.ZZN.com.*)*

Midlife shift enables architect to design homes at home

PHOTO BY ROGER CARPIO

ADEVA

By Cecile G. Garcia

CAREER Tales

LIFE—as an independent architect, that is—for Daniel Adeva, Jr. began at 40. Nine years ago, at that age, Adeva left a stable corporate job to go into professional practice on his own. Starting over wasn't easy. For his modest practice in designing homes, he set-up an office at home and hires people on a per project basis. In midlife, Adeva has shifted gears and is well on his way to his own definition of personal fulfillment.

Good background

Adeva has a varied and well-rounded background related to his profession. He finished architecture at the University of Sto. Tomas in 1972. "I took up architecture because I liked drawing and math," says Adeva, who was also thinking of studying civil engineering afterwards. But plans miscarried.

While awaiting the results of the board exams, he worked as a draftsman in the firm of the late Angel Nakpil, one of the country's foremost architects. "He was a city planner. I was exposed to design and subdivision planning. During breaks, I used to browse through his plans. I realized I had a lot to learn," says Adeva.

He stayed with Nakpil for a year. "I was 21 and anything seemed possible." Afterwards, he worked as in-house architect of the AFP Medical Center (V. Luna Hospital), where he was honed in remodeling and renovation. "I became exposed to the application of theories, to practice. My experience with Nakpil had, of course, enhanced me theoretically," explains Adeva.

He quit after three years and joined National Power Corporation's architectural design division. His job involved designing structures with architectural components. His group was doing offices, houses and some site planning. "There was a little of everything and I liked it." Though it was less exciting than his two previous jobs, it paid well and Adeva made the most of it. He stayed for 14 years. In 1992, he availed of the company's early retirement package and engaged in business. It turned out to be crucial. "It was then I realized there was only one thing I wanted to do."

Purely personal

Adeva says designing a house is highly personal. "The architect must relate and adapt the design to the needs of the client. It's important that he understands, interprets and analyses what the client wants before he can put anything down on paper," says Adeva.

In fact, the first things the architect discusses with the client are the latter's needs or requirements and whether or not the area or space allotted for the prospective structure can meet these requirements. Next is design. The middle class Filipino, says Adeva, usually goes with the current trend, while high-end clients have more definitive tastes.

The third consideration is the budget, which is no less important. Adeva feels his biggest challenge as an architect is making the most of a client's budget. "Most architects face this challenge because the majority of clients have limited resources." Needless to say, there is challenge too in projects with huge budgets. "But a bigger budget means greater expectations from your client." Smilingly, Adeva admits he would take both anytime.

Normally, the architect's fee is based on project cost. "Our job is to design and supervise," avers Adeva, who feels the architect should protect and safeguard his client's interests, particularly from unscrupulous contractors. "Of course, not all projects have a contractor." Nonetheless, Adeva believes architects must be honest, "aside from being creative, committed and dedicated."

Science and art

Although architecture is a science and an art, Adeva believes it is really an art and therefore, the architect is an artist. Citing Nakpil and Locsin as his role models, he claims he needs inspiration for his designs. "Inspiration is a mood. I can finish a design, not including studies, in a day or a month, depending on my mood."

Personally, Adeva likes American architecture. He says Philippine architecture is more eclectic with a very strong Spanish flavor. "Ideally, the Filipino home should be well-ventilated with high ceilings. But we can't always have this due to existing space constraints."

Adeva says that architectural practice can be lucrative but "it depends on the market." Realistically, however, an architect has to be well-connected. He needs contacts in order to establish a highly lucrative practice. According to Adeva, he gets clients from his coterie of friends and acquaintances, and people he has worked for who in turn give referrals.

There is no surefire formula for success, Adeva contends. "Hard work and talent are major factors. But without the necessary break or luck, I don't think you can go far." Of course, pleasing and satisfying clients is less chancy. "If all his requirements are met and the design is properly interpreted and executed, the client will be happy," declares Adeva. In this case, the architect is even happier and he is fulfilled.

With most of the difficulties of starting over behind him, Adeva knows that being happy is a choice one makes and that he made his just at the right time.

What are your secrets for surviving a performance appraisal?

WORKING WOUNDED

By Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I have a performance appraisal coming up with my boss. Unfortunately, my boss and I aren't on the best of terms so I'm pretty nervous. Are there any tricks or techniques I can use to make my review less painful?

Skating on thin ice

Did you hear about the guy who ate 22 hotdogs in three minutes to win a hotdog-eating contest? People wondered how he managed to down so many tube steaks so quickly. "Oh, it's simple," he confided to a reporter. "Don't chew; it only slows you down."

Unfortunately, that's also the attitude that most people adopt when it comes to their performance appraisals. They don't ask questions, they don't find out how the evaluation was conducted, they don't actively participate in the process; they just swallow whatever's put in front of them, whole. The problem with that approach, of course, is that a bad performance appraisal can lead to something a heck of a lot worse than a stomachache.

I turned to Modern Personnel Checklists, (Warren, Gorham and Lamonte), the bible of human resource managers, for pointers on planning for a performance review. The following suggestions have been adapted from it:

1. Ask to see a copy of the evaluation form before your review. Because this is an evaluation and not the Spanish Inquisition, Modern Personnel Checklists suggests that supervisors give employees a copy of the blank evaluation form before the review. This literally puts everyone on the same page for the evaluation. Some experts even recommend that the "evaluatee" (that's you) use the evaluation form to evaluate their own performance and that time be set aside during the review to compare the supervisor's results with the self-evaluation.

2. Ask how and when you were observed. Unfortunately, too many supervisors listen to their gut rather than observing their employees in action. An employee I once worked with took the bold step of scheduling an "observation meeting" with his boss to be held at the employee's workstation just before his evaluation so his boss could see firsthand what life was really like at the reception desk.

3. Check to see if the same box is checked clear across the evaluation form. Very few employees are "excellent" or "poor" at everything associated with their jobs. If you receive uniform marks across the board you could have a strong argument with Personnel that you were evaluated unfairly.

4. Was a great deal of time spent on a few uncharacteristic actions? Everybody has a bad day. The major thrust of the performance review should be on your overall or average performance—not on one or more atypical actions.

I guess the upshot of all this advice is: don't be a weenie. Don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions, or to make a few reasonable demands, or to make sure your appraisal is fair. Because the alternative could be getting your buns toasted.

Here are the results of the recent workingwounded.com poll: How do you deal with negative feedback from your boss during a performance appraisal?

—Fight 'em, 8 percent

—Agree with 'em, 13 percent

—Pick and choose your fights carefully, 78 percent

Kim from L.A. sent our winning email. "Keep a file on yourself all year. Insert thank-you letters from customers and co-workers. Then, summarize it and give it to your supervisor just before your review . . . And if you have one of those bosses who don't give much feedback, ask, what should I keep doing, what should I do more of and what should I do less of."

(E-mail feedback to bob@workingwounded.com.*)*

Do a systematic job hunt

(From page B14)

Take advantage of changes so you can move your career in the direction you want it to go. Take control and "impose your own terms upon life."

In today's world, many people job hunt virtually all the time. Twelve years ago, at a time when US corporations were more stable, I met an executive at a major pharmaceuticals company. He had been with that company 30 years, and planned to stay there until retirement.

Yet, while I was talking to him, he reached into his bottom drawer and pulled out an up-to-date resume. He was not starting a new job hunt; he believed he should always have an up-to-date resume and keep on looking—even though he had been working at the same company for 30 years! A good number of his job hunts were "successful" in that his outside exploration got him to his high position in the same company.

Next move

Job-hunting does not necessarily mean you want to change jobs now. Maybe you'll make your next actual job change a few years down the road. Or maybe someone will change your job for you—without asking. When are you going to start thinking about your next move?

Plan your career transitions—your moves from one job to the next. Don't have them thrust upon you. First, know which job is right for you: a job in which you will excel and which you will feel satisfied doing. Then, see how well your present job fits those desires. Don't leave your job for another one that is equally unsatisfying.

On the other hand, don't remain in your current job out of inertia.

Career transitions are prompted by changes in a company—such as when it cuts back or introduces major technological or strategic changes—or by a change in you and your goals for your life. Be alert for a coming transition.

(Reprinted with permission from Five-o-clock.)

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BY TITA DATU PUANGCO

Advice
FOR THE
ANXIOUS PERSON
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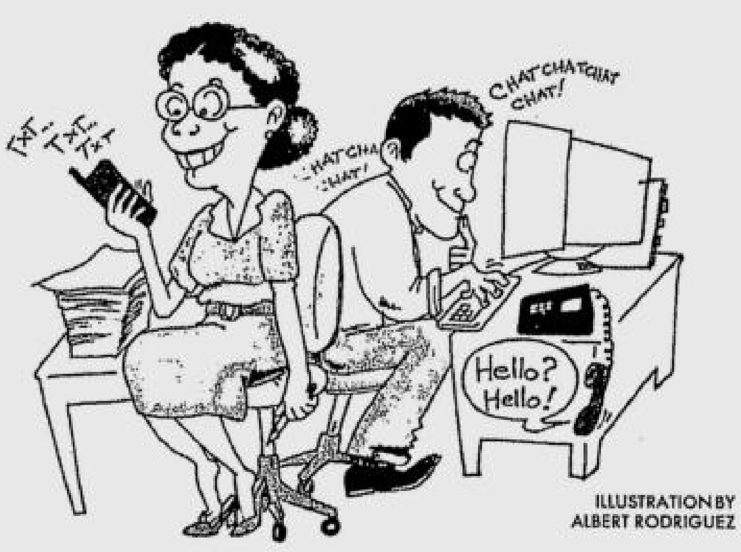
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Netiquette

It also pays to issue guidelines on basic netiquette, the courtesy and etiquette for the use of the Internet in general and e-mail in particular. Doug Harper proposes, as the basic premise of netiquette, the golden rule, "That which thou findest hateful to receive, sendest thou not to others."

He summarizes the 10 Commandments of netiquette: "Thou shall include a clear and specific subject line. Thou shall edit any quoted text down to the minimum. Thou shall read thine own message thrice before sending it. Thou shall ponder how the recipients might react to thy message. Thou shall check spelling and grammar. Thou shall not curse, flame, spam or use all caps. Thou shall not forward any chain letter. Thou shall not use email for any illegal or unethical purpose. Thou shall, when in doubt, save thy message overnight and reread it in the light of dawn before pressing the send button."

Indeed, the time has come for policies to be set in place for these new communications media. But policies are not enough. People have to be oriented and educated on their use. In some instances when personal calls and Internet chats get in the way of the work, some coaching and counseling may be needed.

Let us make the new communications media work to achieve greater heights of productivity. We also recognize the personal benefit of using them to renew acquaintances and build relationships. Just make sure this is done sparingly or on off-work hours.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting, a full service management consulting firm which offers a helping hand to leaders, people and enterprises as they plan and implement learning and business solutions that address complex change towards sustainable growth. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail to ancillaedc@pacific.net.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*

There's more to life than time

RECIPES *for*
LEARNING

By
Moje Ramos-Aquino

THANKS to Dino Alberto Subingsubing for his reaction to our column about myths on time and I quote:

"Myth: There is only one kind of time.

"Experience: There is clock time and there is psychological time. This is where the great scientist and mystic Albert Einstein's theory of relativity comes into play.

"Given one minute, putting your hand on a hot stove makes the minute feel like an hour. Given one hour, sitting next to a pretty girl who is a good conversationalist makes the hour seem like a minute.

"The lesson for us working Joes is that we should put all our best efforts at whatever we are doing at the moment. Forget about time. If we really like our work and what we're doing in the here and now, time will no longer be an issue. Perhaps that's what eternity is about: the absence of time or myths about time."

So there, how well do you use your present time? Are you able to do what is important or are you mired in what is deemed urgent or convenient or what might be in the future or what could have been rectified in the past or are you just whiling away time? Then, as Dino says, you are conscious about time and not what you ought to do. You might be losing out on the best of life.

More to life

There is more to life than just watching the clock and marking time. Therefore, our first activity for our Workshop on Enjoying the Time of Your Life While Achieving Your Life Plans (WETYLWAYL—that's the new title of our workshop. It is more appropriate and suggestive of a positive, active life) is to record how we have been using our time.

Ready? On your worksheet, please use the example on this page and make your Time Log Form, one per day.

First, fill in the boxes for your Name, Date/Day, and Objectives. It is best that you always write down your objectives to remind you of the big picture, that these activities are not there just for keeping busy, but they are there to move towards your objectives, your goals and eventually your mission towards the path of your vision.

Second, log in your activities, time started and time finished. Identify the importance and necessity towards the achievement of your life plans of that activity on a scale of one to five.

Third, write your comments, e.g. "This took a long time because when I started the activity, I didn't have all the data I needed. I called up Accounting and I waited for 30 minutes for the figures that I needed. Also, in the middle of the activity, the phone rang and it was the boss asking for my comments."

24-hour log

Be sure to log all your activities on a 24-hour day basis. Do the log, line by line, row by row. Record every single thing that happened to you or that you did. Including quiet times like thinking or listening or reading.

Name		Date/Day	
Goals & Objectives			
Time	Activity	Importance & Necessity (Pls. circle appropriate number)	Comments (What did you achieve,. Next steps, etc)
5:00 a.m.	Wake up Gargle Prepare & eat breakfast	1 2 3 4 5	
5:30	Take a shower	1 2 3 4 5	
6:00		1 2 3 4 5	
6:30		1 2 3 4 5	
7:00		1 2 3 4 5	
7:30		1 2 3 4 5	
8:00		1 2 3 4 5	
8:30		1 2 3 4 5	
9:00		1 2 3 4 5	
9:30		1 2 3 4 5	
10:00		1 2 3 4 5	
10:30		1 2 3 4 5	
11:00		1 2 3 4 5	
11:30		1 2 3 4 5	
1200 nn		1 2 3 4 5	

Do a one-week Time Log. Next Wednesday, we will continue with this activity and we will analyze your use of time. Meanwhile, just fill in the form, don't do any analyzing

Take care because we care. 13-0 *tayo, ha!*

I am so happy to know that our engineers have banded together to push for legislation and reforms in the engineering and related fields. Let's help the party list Philippine Technological Council (PTC). Their primary nominee is civil engineer/lawyer Primi Cal.

(Send feedback to moje.ramos@aquino.ZZN.com.)

Midlife shift enables architect to design homes at home

PHOTO BY ROGER CARPIO

ADEVA

BY CECILE G. GARCIA

LIFE—as an independent architect, that is—for Daniel Adeva, Jr. began at 40. Nine years ago, at that age, Adeva left a stable corporate job to go into professional practice on his own. Starting over wasn't easy. For his modest practice in designing homes, he set-up an office at home and hires people on a per project basis. In midlife, Adeva has shifted gears and is well on his way to his own definition of personal fulfillment.

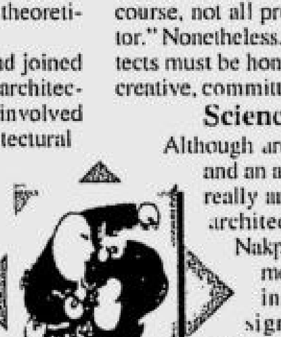
Good background

Adeva has a varied and well-rounded background related to his profession. He finished architecture at the University of Sto. Tomas in 1972. "I took up architecture because I liked drawing and math," says Adeva, who was also thinking of studying civil engineering afterwards. But plans miscarried.

While awaiting the results of the board exams, he worked as a draftsman in the firm of the late Angel Nakpil, one of the country's foremost architects. "He was a city planner. I was exposed to design and subdivision planning. During breaks, I used to browse through his plans. I realized I had a lot to learn," says Adeva.

He stayed with Nakpil for a year. "I was 21 and anything seemed possible." Afterwards, he worked as in-house architect of the AFP Medical Center (V. Luna Hospital), where he was honed in remodeling and renovation. "I became exposed to the application of theories, to practice. My experience with Nakpil had, of course, enhanced me theoretically," explains Adeva.

He quit after three years and joined National Power Corporation's architectural design division. His job involved designing structures with architectural components. His group was doing offices, houses and some site planning. "There was a little of everything and I liked it." Though it was less exciting than his two previous jobs, it paid well and Adeva made the most of it. He stayed for 14 years. In 1992, he availed of the company's early retirement package and engaged in business. It turned out to be crucial. "It was then I realized there was only one thing I wanted to do."



CAREER *Tales*

Purely personal

Adeva says designing a house is highly personal. "The architect must relate and adapt the design to the needs of the client. It's important that he understands, interprets and analyses what the client wants before he can put anything down on paper," says Adeva.

In fact, the first things the architect discusses with the client are the latter's needs or requirements and whether or not the area or space allotted for the prospective structure can meet these requirements. Next is design. The middle class Filipino, says Adeva, usually goes with the current trend, while high-end clients have more definitive tastes.

The third consideration is the budget, which is no less important. Adeva feels his biggest challenge as an architect is making the most of a client's budget. "Most architects face this challenge because the majority of clients have limited resources." Needless to say, there is challenge too in projects with huge budgets. "But a bigger budget means greater expectations from your client." Smilingly, Adeva admits he would take both anytime.

Normally, the architect's fee is based on project cost. "Our job is to design and supervise," avers Adeva, who feels the architect should protect and safeguard his client's interests, particularly from unscrupulous contractors. "Of course, not all projects have a contractor." Nonetheless, Adeva believes architects must be honest, "aside from being creative, committed and dedicated."

Science and art

Although architecture is a science and an art, Adeva believes it is really an art and therefore, the architect is an artist. Citing Nakpil and Locsin as his role models, he claims he needs inspiration for his designs. "Inspiration is a mood. I can finish a design, not including studies, in a day or a month, depending on my mood."

Personally, Adeva likes American architecture. He says Philippine architecture is more eclectic with a very strong Spanish flavor. "Ideally, the Filipino home should be well-ventilated with high ceilings. But we can't always have this due to existing space constraints."

Adeva says that architectural practice can be lucrative but "it depends on the market." Realistically, however, an architect has to be well-connected. He needs contacts in order to establish a highly lucrative practice. According to Adeva, he gets clients from his coterie of friends and acquaintances, and people he has worked for who in turn give referrals.

There is no surefire formula for success, Adeva contends. "Hard work and talent are major factors. But without the necessary break or luck, I don't think you can go far." Of course, pleasing and satisfying clients is less chancy. "If all his requirements are met and the design is properly interpreted and executed, the client will be happy," declares Adeva. In this case, the architect is even happier and he is fulfilled.

With most of the difficulties of starting over behind him, Adeva knows that being happy is a choice one makes and that he made his just at the right time

---

What are your secrets for surviving a performance appraisal?

WORKING
WOUNDED

By Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I have a performance appraisal coming up with my boss. Unfortunately, my boss and I aren't on the best of terms so I'm pretty nervous. Are there any tricks or techniques I can use to make my review less painful?

Skating on thin ice

Did you hear about the guy who ate 22 hotdogs in three minutes to win a hotdog-eating contest? People wondered how he managed to down so many tube steaks so quickly. "Oh, it's simple," he confided to a reporter. "Don't chew; it only slows you down."

Unfortunately, that's also the attitude that most people adopt when it comes to their performance appraisals. They don't ask questions, they don't find out how the evaluation was conducted, they don't actively participate in the process; they just swallow whatever's put in front of them, whole. The problem with that approach, of course, is that a bad performance appraisal can lead to something a heck of a lot worse than a stomachache.

I turned to Modern Personnel Checklists, (Warren, Gorham and Lamonte), the bible of human resource managers, for pointers on planning for a performance review. The following suggestions have been adapted from it:

1. Ask to see a copy of the evaluation form before your review. Because this is an evaluation and not the Spanish Inquisition, Modern Personnel Checklists suggests that supervisors give employees a copy of the blank evaluation form before the review. This literally puts everyone on the same page for the evaluation. Some experts even recommend that the "evaluatee" (that's you) use the evaluation form to evaluate their own performance and that time be set aside during the review to compare the supervisor's results with the self-evaluation.

2. Ask how and when you were observed. Unfortunately, too many supervisors listen to their gut rather than observing their employees in action. An employee I once worked with took the bold step of scheduling an "observation meeting" with his boss to be held at the employee's workstation just before his evaluation so his boss could see firsthand what life was really like at the reception desk.

3. Check to see if the same box is checked clear across the evaluation form. Very few employees are "excellent" or "poor" at everything associated with their jobs. If you receive uniform marks across the board you could have a strong argument with Personnel that you were evaluated unfairly.

4. Was a great deal of time spent on a few uncharacteristic actions? Everybody has a bad day. The major thrust of the performance review should be on your overall or average performance—not on one or more atypical actions.

I guess the upshot of all this advice is: don't be a weenie. Don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions, or to make a few reasonable demands, or to make sure your appraisal is fair. Because the alternative could be getting your buns toasted.

Here are the results of the recent workingwounded.com poll: How do you deal with negative feedback from your boss during a performance appraisal?

—Fight 'em, 8 percent

—Agree with 'em, 13 percent

—Pick and choose your fights carefully, 78 percent

Kim from L.A. sent our winning email. "Keep a file on yourself all year. Insert thank-you letters from customers and co-workers. Then, summarize it and give it to your supervisor just before your review . . . And if you have one of those bosses who don't give much feedback, ask, what should I keep doing, what should I do more of and what should I do less of."

(E-mail feedback to bob@workingwounded.com.*)*

Do a systematic job hunt

(From page B14)

Take advantage of changes so you can move your career in the direction you want it to go. Take control and "impose your own terms upon life."

In today's world, many people job hunt virtually all the time. Twelve years ago, at a time when US corporations were more stable, I met an executive at a major pharmaceuticals company. He had been with that company 30 years, and planned to stay there until retirement.

Yet, while I was talking to him, he reached into his bottom drawer and pulled out an up-to-date resume. He was not starting a new job hunt; he believed he should always have an up-to-date resume and keep on looking—even though he had been working at the same company for 30 years! A good number of his job hunts were "successful" in that his outside exploration got him to his high position in the same company.

Next move

Job-hunting does not necessarily mean you want to change jobs now. Maybe you'll make your next actual job change a few years down the road. Or maybe someone will change your job for you—without asking. When are you going to start thinking about your next move?

Plan your career transitions—your moves from one job to the next. Don't have them thrust upon you. First, know which job is right for you: a job in which you will excel and which you will feel satisfied doing. Then, see how well your present job fits those desires. Don't leave your job for another one that is equally unsatisfying.

On the other hand, don't remain in your current job out of inertia.

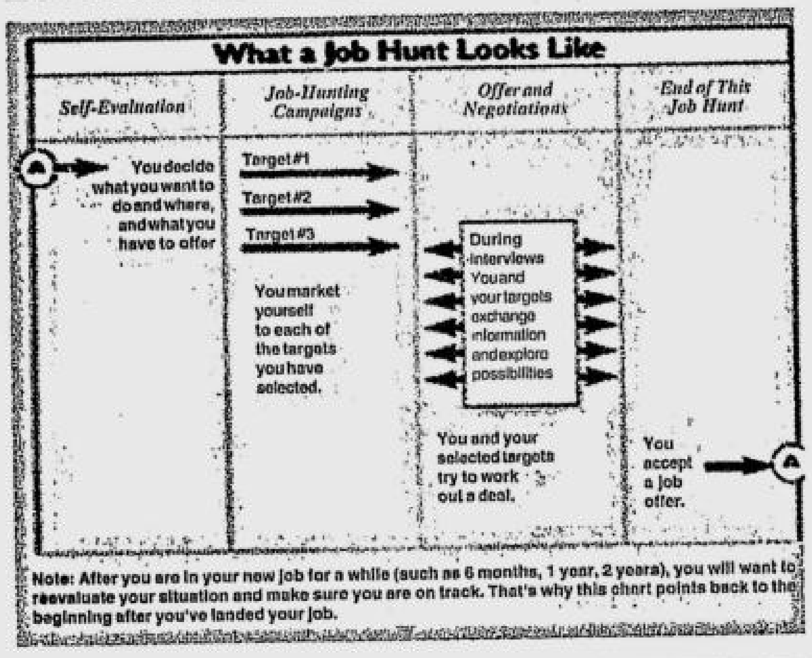
Career transitions are prompted by changes in a company—such as when it cuts back or introduces major technological or strategic changes—or by a change in you and your goals for your life. Be alert for a coming transition.

(Reprinted with permission from Five-o-clock.)

e-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph.

PEOPLE at WORK

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ■ REGINA GALANG REYES, Subsection Editor


What a Job Hunt Looks Like
Self-Evaluation
Job-Hunting Campaigns
Offer and Negotiations
End of This Job Hunt
A
You decide what you want to do and where, and what you have to offer
Target #1
Target #2
Target #3
You market yourself to each of the targets you have selected.
During interviews You and your targets exchange information and explore possibilities
You and your selected targets try to work out a deal.
You accept a job offer.
A

Note: After you are in your new job for a while (such as 6 months, 1 year, 2 years), you will want to reevaluate your situation and make sure you are on track. That's why this chart points back to the beginning after you've landed your job.

Do a systematic job-hunt

By Kate Wendleton

Man is not born to solve the problems of the universe but to find out what he has to do and to restrain himself within the limits of his comprehension.

- Goethe

SUCCESSFUL job-hunting is a system. Working the system increases your chances of getting the job you want—faster. Working the system also helps relieve your natural anxiety about what you should be doing next.

The system is the same whether you are employed or unemployed, and even if you are not interested in changing jobs now. The system is the same whether you are looking for full- or part-time employment, consulting, or freelance work.

That's because job-hunting in a changing economy means continuously becoming aware of market conditions inside as well as outside your present organization. And learning what you have to offer—both inside and outside your organization.

The time to become aware of your opportunities is not when the pressure is on to find a new job but now.

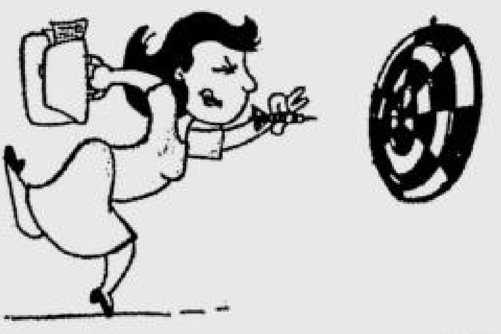


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Job-hunting process

You select or target a job market by selecting a geographic area you'd be willing to work in, an industry or company size (small, medium or large company), and a job or function within that industry. For example, you may want to be a pressman in the publishing industry in New Hampshire. That's your target market.

Then, conduct a campaign for the sole purpose of getting interviews in your target area. A number of those interviews might eventually lead to acceptable job offers.

Job-hunting seems to have dozens of equally important steps. There are resumés and cover letters to write, personal contacts to make, search firms to contact, ads to answer, notes to write, and so on. You can lose sight of what is most important.

There are only four main parts in a job-hunting campaign: targeting, getting interviews in each target, interviewing, and following up.

Do your best and put your effort into these areas. Everything you do in a job hunt grows out of your targets, which lead to interviews and then to offers. If you have targeted well, can get interviews, are well prepared for them, and know how to turn interviews into offers, you will be focused and less affected by mistakes in other areas of your search.

Length of search

How long will a job search take? The length of each step in your search can vary considerably. For example, selecting the area in which you want to work can be as simple as saying, "I want to be a controller in a small firm." Or it can be as complex as saying, "I want a position of leadership in a growing computer services business in any major US city, where I can run my part of the operation—working with fast-paced but ethical people who are imaginative and leaders in their field. The job should lead to the position of partner."

The entire campaign can be very short. Let's say, for example, that:

- You have focused on a specific, realizable target.
- There are openings in the area that interests you.
- You know of someone in a position to hire you.
- You and the hiring manager "strike sparks" during the interview and it progresses naturally.

Start to finish could take a month or two. The average job hunt does take longer. Statistics show that for professionals and middle managers, it takes an average of four to six months or more to find the job they want. Career changers take longer. And people currently employed usually take longer to find a new job because they often don't work as hard at the hunt.

Longer time

It can take you longer than a month or two because, among other things:

- You may not be that clear about what you want.
- What you want may not be realistic.
- Maybe it is realistic but there are no immediate openings.
- There may be openings but you may not know where they are.
- You may hear of some openings but may not know someone in a position to hire you.
- You may meet someone in a position to hire you but the two of you don't hit it off.

Devote a large amount of time and energy to your search if you seriously intend to find a suitable job. A thorough search is so much work that the job you finally land will seem easy by comparison.

On the other hand, job-hunting is like any other skill: you'll get better at it with practice. You'll learn the techniques, and you'll learn more about what's right for you.

You'll become aware of what's happening in your chosen field, so that when you start a formal search it won't take so long.

New approach

Keep up with changes in your company and your target area. To compete in today's competitive market, you must know:

- yourself
- the market—both inside and outside your company
- how to compete against "trained" job-hunters

(See graph)

Job-hunting is no longer something that happens only when you want to change jobs. Do it informally all the time to stay sharp in your present position.

You should always be aware of what may adversely affect your present security. Don't expect your employer to tell you that the company or your department is heading in a different direction. Be ready when the time for change comes.

HOW TO/B13

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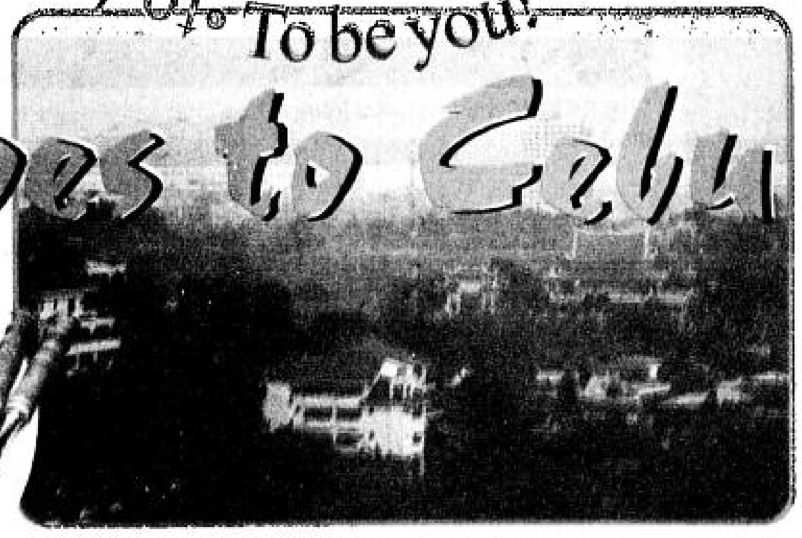

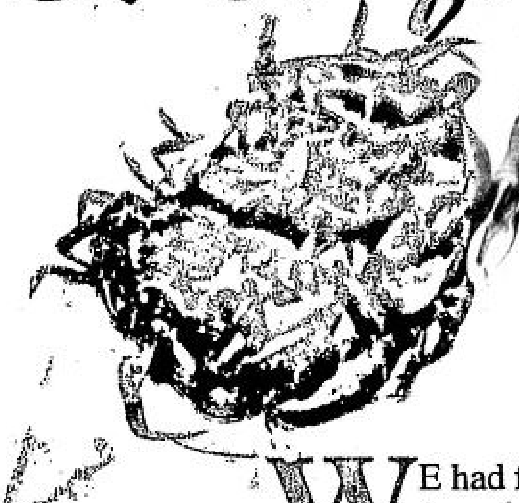

WE had four days to focus on technology, energy, people and good food when Globe Telecom brought 2bU! to Cebu's first IT summit. During off-hours, we moved about and immersed ourselves in the lifestyle you'd find in the Queen City of the South. Here's why we love Cebu—and why you would, too. Read on.

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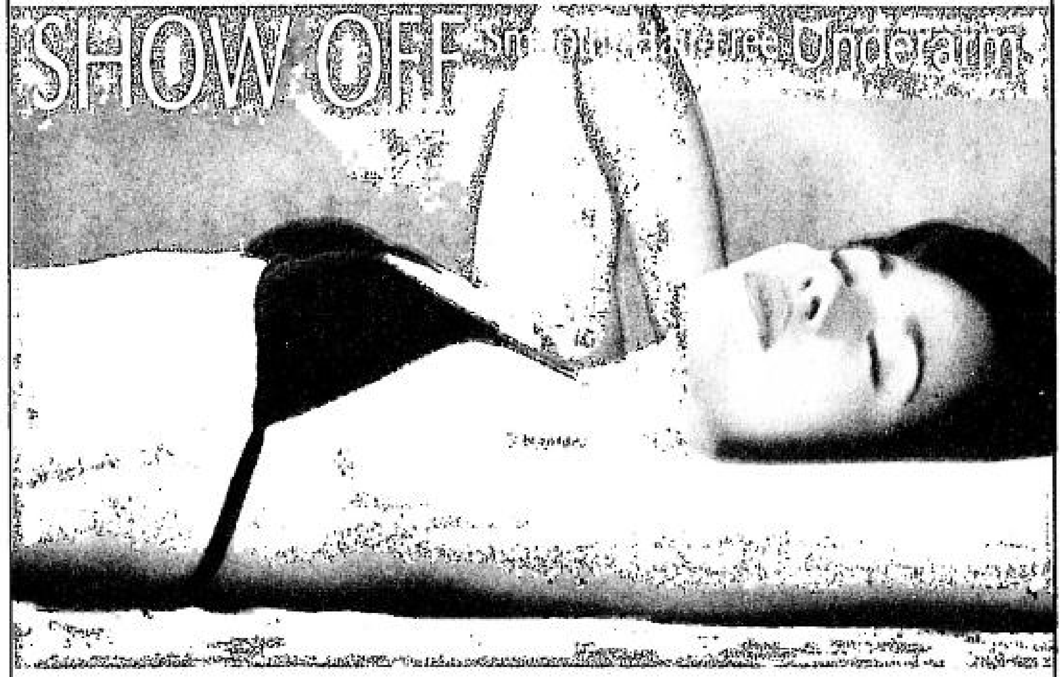

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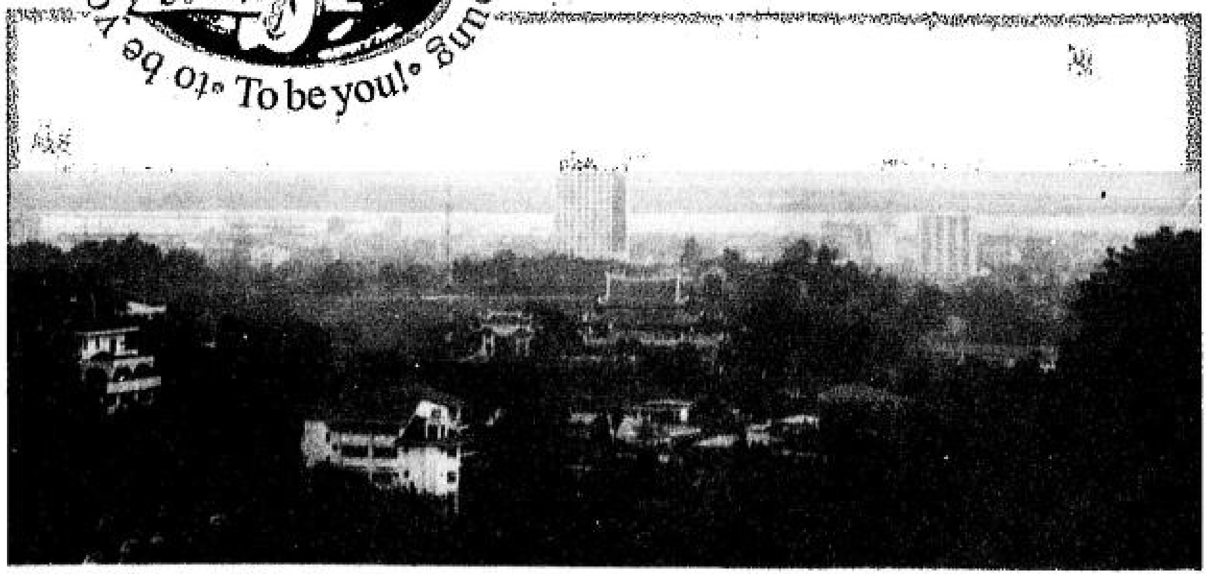
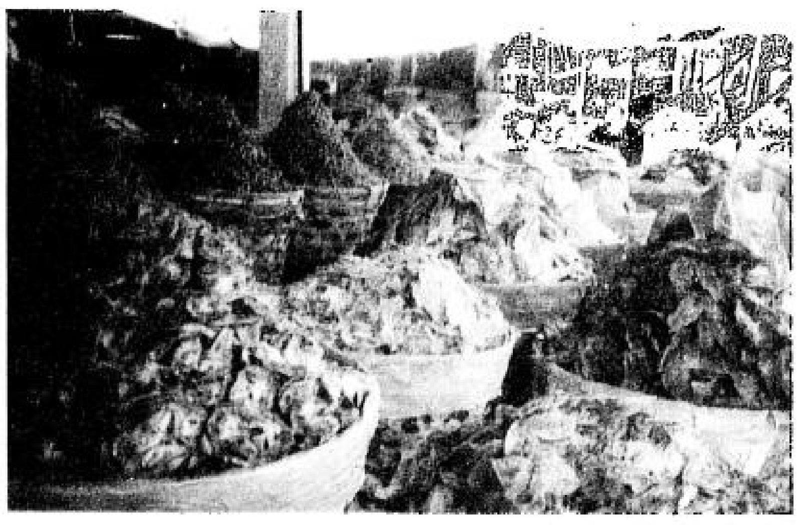
THE AIR DOWN THERE. The author's scintillating view of the Cebu skyscape



THE SCENIC view of Cebu from the Taoist temple

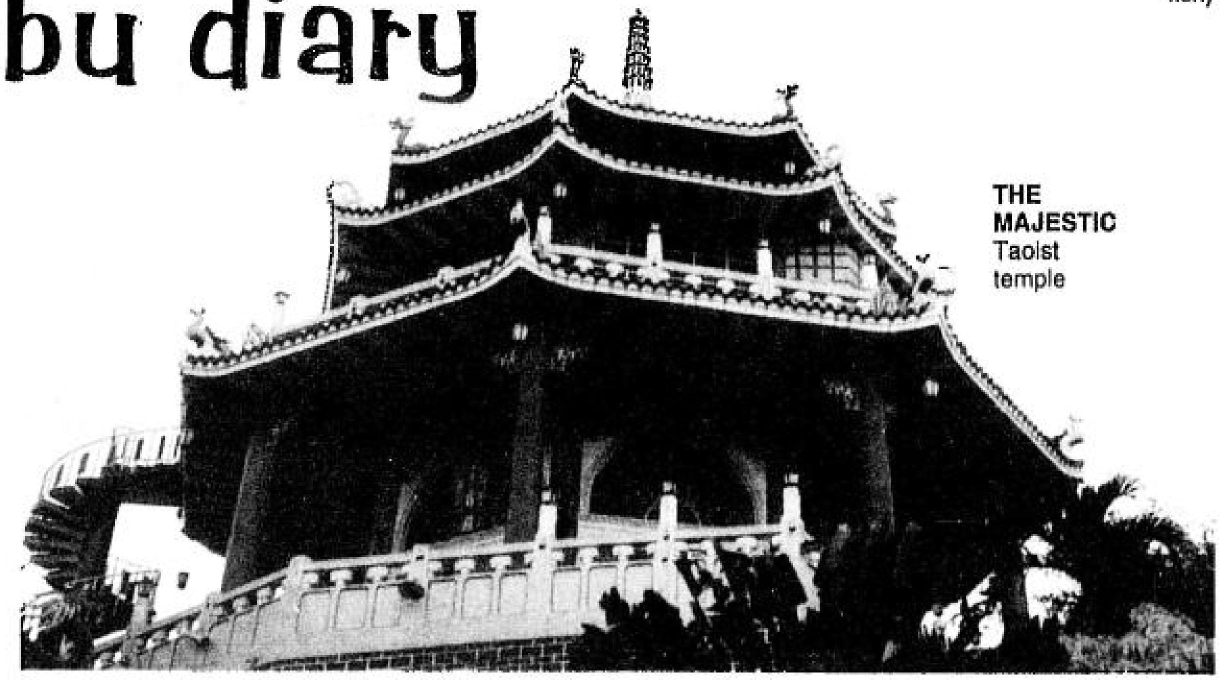


ENDLESS piles of *bulad* (dried fish)

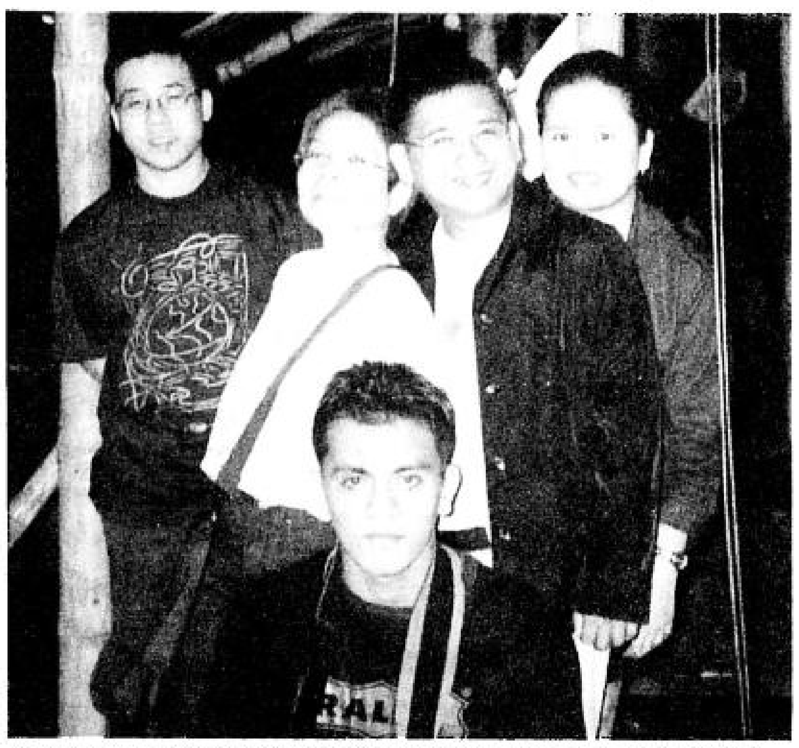
PHOTOS BY PAM PASTOR

My Cebu diary

BY PAM PASTOR



THE MAJESTIC Taoist temple



ABOUT TO PICK SEAFOOD FOR DINNER. (From left) Jonji, Cynthia, Mozart, the author and Beam-beam (seated)

MARCH 27

8 p.m.—I was sprawled on my bed, enjoying my last few hours in Manila. I will be leaving the house at 3:30 a.m. the next day. There will be no shut-eye for me. If I attempted to sleep at all, I was sure I wouldn't wake up on time.

My bags were good and ready—and as usual, I over-packed. Our helper said, "*Pang-isang buwan na yan ah!*" It's a habit I can't shake off. It gave me security, I guess, to know that no matter what happens on the trip, I will have enough clothes to wear.

The flight

March 28

6:30 a.m.—Mozart and I munched on burgers while waiting for our plane. Yeah, yeah, mad cow and all that, but we didn't have much of a choice. The tuna in the snack bar looked scary to me.

Cynthia Evidente, Globe's senior manager of corporate communications, soon arrived. We flipped through magazines and read newspapers while waiting for the plane.

7:40 a.m.—Aboard PR847. I was so groggy that I started drifting off to sleep before the plane even took off. The whole flight was like an out-of-body experience for me. I vaguely remembered the stewardess setting down crackers and juice on my tray, which I promptly ignored. I saw hands taking them away. Then I drifted off again. The next thing I knew, I felt the plane hit the ground and rolled along bumpily. So much for a perfect landing.

March 29

12:59 a.m.—I was finally back in my hotel room. The water was running; I was waiting for the tub to fill so I can soak for a while—a nightly ritual when I'm elsewhere.

Although we spent almost the entire morning and early afternoon sleeping (the bed at the Marriott is so cozy, you couldn't lie on it without wanting to sleep), we sure made up for the lost time at night.

We headed off to Patio Isabel for Globe's press conference on Cebu's First IT summit. The food at Patio Isabel was so good—I still cannot forget it.

After the presscon, Leo Sanchez, Globe's director for marketing services, took us to The Village (which is Cebu's Malate, they say) and introduced us to Mario Colmenares, owner of three bars—Yo! Latino, Soap and Fuel.

I tried ordering iced tea and was chided because of that. I decided to down a margarita. I failed. Getting drunk once (way, way back) was really traumatic. I think I drank enough to last me a lifetime. I couldn't even manage a sip now.

Leo said, laughing heartily, "You don't drink? You'll feel out of place in Cebu!"

The people in the bar were ordering one drink after another, enjoying the music and each other's company.

Nightlife in Cebu is alive—even on Wednesday nights. Amazing.

Real experience

The thing about these trips is that you get to experience the best of everything. You get nice hotel rooms, eat in the best restaurants, hop from one hip bar to another. You bask in luxury, you live it up for a few days. Not that I have any reason to complain, but these trips leave me wanting to see what the real life there is like. How the real people live.

That I got to find out tonight. Mozart and I went out, walked along the seemingly endless row of barbecue stalls called Teritoryo San Miguel and took a jeepney ride around town. That was an experience.

Maybe I did not over-pack after all. Just today, I changed clothes thrice. If this kept up, I might actually run out of clothes.

The IT Summit

12:03 p.m.—Cebu's first IT Summit opened this morning, at the Marriott's ground floor. There were booths all around, showcasing developments in technology and introducing new services like DSL. Inside the ballroom was a conference where speakers were telling people about the status of IT in Cebu (they have 422 registered Net cafés and about 20 percent more that are not registered—impressive) and how they planned on making Cebu the country's IT capital. It was a gathering of Cebu's technology lovers.

We sat by the side of the door as Mar Roxas talked about the importance of IT. I was listening, I really was, until I heard someone snoring lightly. At first, I thought it was Mozart. I looked around and saw that it was the lady beside him. It wasn't a pretty sight. Her mouth was open and her tongue was poking out as she continued to snore. I had to bite my lip. I have this uncontrollable urge to laugh at the most inappropriate times.

At the same time, adding to the confusion, Mozart was struggling with his cell phone. People kept texting him. He didn't know how to switch it to silent mode. When one more message arrived, the snoring lady opened one eye and hissed at him, "*I*-silent mode *mo*!"

I signaled for him to sit beside me. While I switched his phone to silent, Mozart wrote down on his pad, "*Dapat* silent mode *rin ang* snore *nya*." We tried to control our laughter.

Already secure with the knowledge that his phone would stay quiet for the remainder of the conference, Mozart almost fell off his seat when the next message came in. The alert had been set to the loudest mode. Turned out a prankster from his office changed the settings of his silent mode, adjusting it to the loudest tones. The snoring lady was really mad. She hissed again, louder this time, and with her eyes flashing, "*I*-silent mode *mo*!" Then she started snoring again.

My tummy hurt from too much laughter.

7 p.m.—We sat in on the meeting of the Ayala Business Club's Cebu Chapter, where lawyer Rodolfo Salalima, senior VP of Globe, gave a short talk. After the meeting was a short fashion show, showing off Globe's newest phones.

After the meeting, we had a long and bumpy ride to Blue Ripples, a restaurant famous for its fresh seafood.

One of the many good things about Cebu is that no matter how far your destination, you wouldn't really mind, because there is hardly any traffic. And taxi drivers are not con artists. They would even give back a P1 change—and would thank you profusely for a P10 tip.

Jonji Gonzalez, Globe's PR for Cebu, was our host for the evening. Hands dirty with crab meat, the conversation was easy and relaxed. It was almost like having dinner with family.

Dessert was at the Dessert Factory. It was both sinful and heavenly. We realized that for a few hours, we did nothing but eat.

At past midnight, I was back in my hotel room, burning the cell phone lines with my honey.

March 30

9 a.m.—Not surprisingly, I woke up with my stomach rumbling.

Mozart, Beam-beam (the photographer) and I went to Ayala Center (a very, very short walk from the Marriott) to search for more stories. We found a treasure trove—Kuting-things—where I bought trinkets for my loved ones.

Lunch was at Tiya Nena's, a restaurant serving Spanish and Filipino food. Everything was good—the *paella* reminded me so much of my *lola*'s.

After lunch, we went back to Kuting-things. Cynthia and Rhoda (Jonji's wife) decided to do a little shopping of their own.

Then Rod, Jonji's driver, became our virtual tour guide as he took us around the city. We went to the San Pedro Fort (the museum is closed, sadly), the Taoist Temple (the view of Cebu is breathtaking), Magellan's Cross and the Basilica de Santo Niño. Outside the church, old women and little kids were selling red candles for a peso each. One little girl tugged at my shirt. I told her to wait for me after I got out of the church. She nodded eagerly.

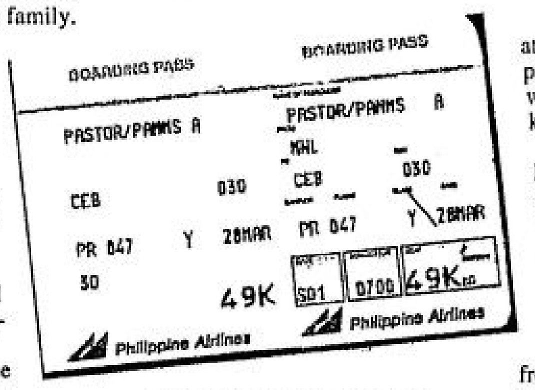
When I went out again, she was nowhere to be found. I asked Rod to give me a second and asked the other kids where she was. They didn't know. I walked around, trying to look for her. I never saw her again.

It was almost time for dinner when we got back to the hotel. A whole bunch of us went to Yo! Latino and enjoyed the spicy food.

9:30 p.m.—Fans were screaming as Wolfgang took centerstage at The Village's Courtyard. Mozart, Beam-beam and I were busy scanning the crowd for people who stood out—for our fashion feature. Then we settled back to enjoy the concert. Rada was also there; she performed one solo and one song with Basti. Basti is Basti—you cannot deny the power of his voice. But tonight, Wolf Gemora was on fire. He pounded away on the drums like there was no tomorrow. Wow.

Past midnight, Mon Escaño, Globe's senior officer for corporate marketing in Cebu and certified party animal, brought us to High Life. A band, SRO (the Side A of Cebu, according to locals), was playing '80s hits and ballads—quite a big shift from Wolfgang's rock concert.

I had a blast singing out loud, dancing like crazy. I met a lot of people. Mon introduced me to everyone. When they said Cebuanos are friendly, they weren't kidding. I felt really at ease. And I haven't had that much fun on a night out in a *looong* time. Roselle Reyes (from Sun.Star) was really nice. She said, "*Uwi ka na bukas? Wag muna.* Party *pa tayo ulit bukas*!"



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At around 2 a.m., Mon, Orly of Sun.Star and I went to Zero Below, a bar part-owned by Francis Magalona. "This is the perfect place to end the night," Mon said.

It was 2:30 a.m. when more people started to pour in. Francis was there—the last time he visited was six months ago, he said.

I was feeling a bit drained after the whole series of activities that I sat quietly at the bar, sipping on my iced tea, trying to gather more energy. People kept coming over to talk and to ask me how I was doing. Everyone in Cebu is really friendly. Hospitable is an understatement.

It is past 3 when we left, but the bar was getting even more crowded. "This will last till 6," Mon said.

Mark Amoranto, AVP for corporate marketing, said, "I think I'm getting too old for this." It was almost 4 when we got back to the hotel.

I was about to rest when a friend from college called with a big problem. After we talked, my drowsiness disappeared. I decided to start packing. I ended up sleeping at 6 a.m.

Going home

March 31

10:20 a.m.—We left the hotel freshly showered for Tabuan, the dry market that sold *bulad* (dried fish). We needed to stock up on *danggit* for our relatives who had been texting us about it. I didn't know there were so many kinds of dried fish—there were huge ones and even one kind that looked like crispy strips of bacon.

We went back to the hotel for checkout. Soon, we were on our way to the airport. This was when Mozart and I realized that the smell of the dried fish had clung to our clothes. It was almost lethal.

We found out that our 2:30 flight had been delayed. I started to panic because I had important plans that night. Good thing it is only a 30-minute delay.

Waiting to board, we spent time going around the shops and snickering at how overpriced everything was, especially the *danggit*. One small pack was P120, when we got one whole kilo for only P270 at Tabuan.

After a few days of heavy eating, lunch was considerably light. Ham and cheese bunwiches (that was all Dunkin Donuts in the waiting area had—they didn't even have eggs to add on), potato chips and cookies.

3 p.m.—We were finally on the plane. There were a lot of little kids on the flight. The Korean baby in front of me was especially cute. I made faces at him.

I promptly fell asleep when the plane took off. I woke up minutes later, feeling cold. I pressed the button for the flight attendant and waited. No one came. I pressed it thrice, for good measure, but still, no one came. Finally, a stewardess walked past my row. I called her. "Can I have a blanket, please?"

"Blanket?" she asked, in a really nasal voice. Too groggy to be snappish, I merely nodded.

I folded my arms across my chest—I was that cold. The hands on my watch ticked away. The stewardess took her sweet time. I even saw her taking empty cups and opened foil packets from other passengers at the other side of the plane. I fell asleep without the blanket.

Minutes later, she approached me and said, "I'm sorry. There are no more blankets. We just lowered the temperature." Oh. Yippee.

As we were about to land, I crossed my fingers for a perfect touchdown. But some wishes remain just that. Our landing was so bumpy that it woke everyone up. Mozart mocked the pilot's voice, "*Kasasalampak lang po natin sa* Ninoy Aquino International Airport." We started laughing—something we've been doing a lot the past days.

Big news hit us when we got off the plane—the release of our baggage would be delayed. We had nothing to do but sit and wait.

Finally loaded with our things more than an hour later, we decided to get metered cabs to avoid the long wait airport taxis would guarantee.

The first cab driver that arrived tried to ask for P400. Oh yes, we were back in Manila. We decided to take airport taxis.

I had a great time in Cebu. No one gave me flack for being too young—except for one guy who said, "Wow! I thought you were 16." I had great company. Cynthia and Mozart were so funny. The people were fantastic, the food was wonderful, the places were great, there was no traffic—I couldn't ask for more.

On the way home, I remembered what Mon said to me as we were saying goodbye: "See? Now you have a reason to go back to Cebu." Yes, I agree. I have a lot of reasons.

E-mail the author at pammy@exchange.ph.

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Most of us have trouble fitting into our pants, what more bringing two media giants into one site? But with inq7.net, the country's most awarded network and the nation's leading newspaper come together to create the biggest online source of Philippine news and information. Get up-to-the-minute news updates, live streaming video/audio of ongoing news events plus the insights and integrity you've come to expect from GMA and the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Sounds amazing? Log on to www.inq7.net.

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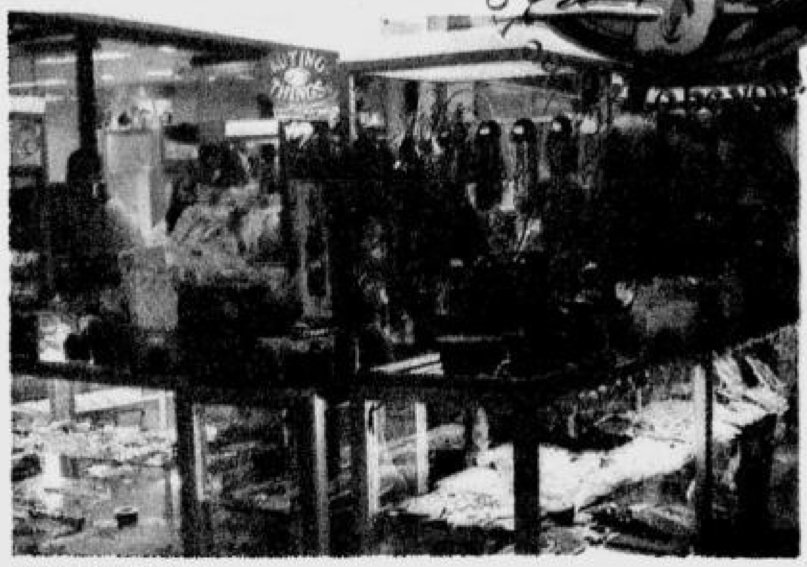
The Inquirer joins the World Wildlife Fund in the fight to save rare animals. From now on you'll be reading more and learning more about the plight of endangered species. In our struggle to save the world, the only weapon we have is your support.



TRINKETS galore

Treasure trove of trinkets

PHOTOS BY ROGER CARPIO AND JOHANN PIERCE LONGAKIT JR.

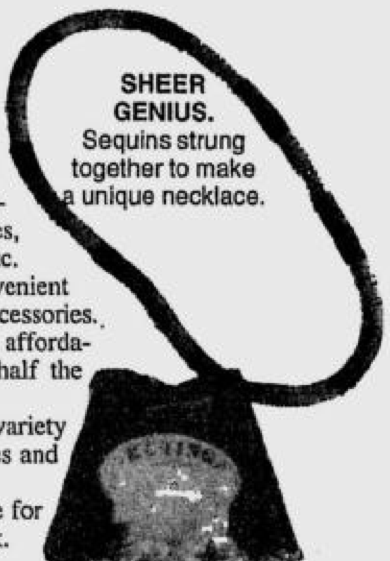
ON THE GROUND floor of Ayala Center Cebu is a treasure trove called Kuting-things. The stall is filled with trinkets—from top to bottom. Colorful beads, silver necklaces, pendants, chokers, anklets, etc., etc., etc.

There are also cute little bags, convenient cell phone cases, magazines and hair accessories.

The best thing about this shop is affordability—you can get the trinkets for half the price you could get them in Manila.

You may also choose from a wide variety of beads and make your own necklaces and bracelets.

Kuting-things is a dream come true for accessory junkies. Here's a sneak peek.



SHEER GENIUS. Sequins strung together to make a unique necklace.

FOR THE DAINTY

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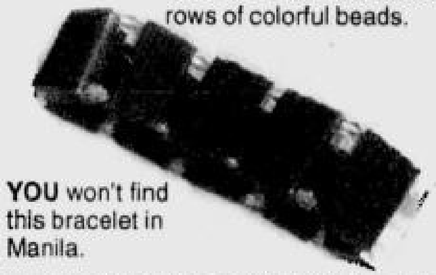
CHOOSE from the endless rows of colorful beads.



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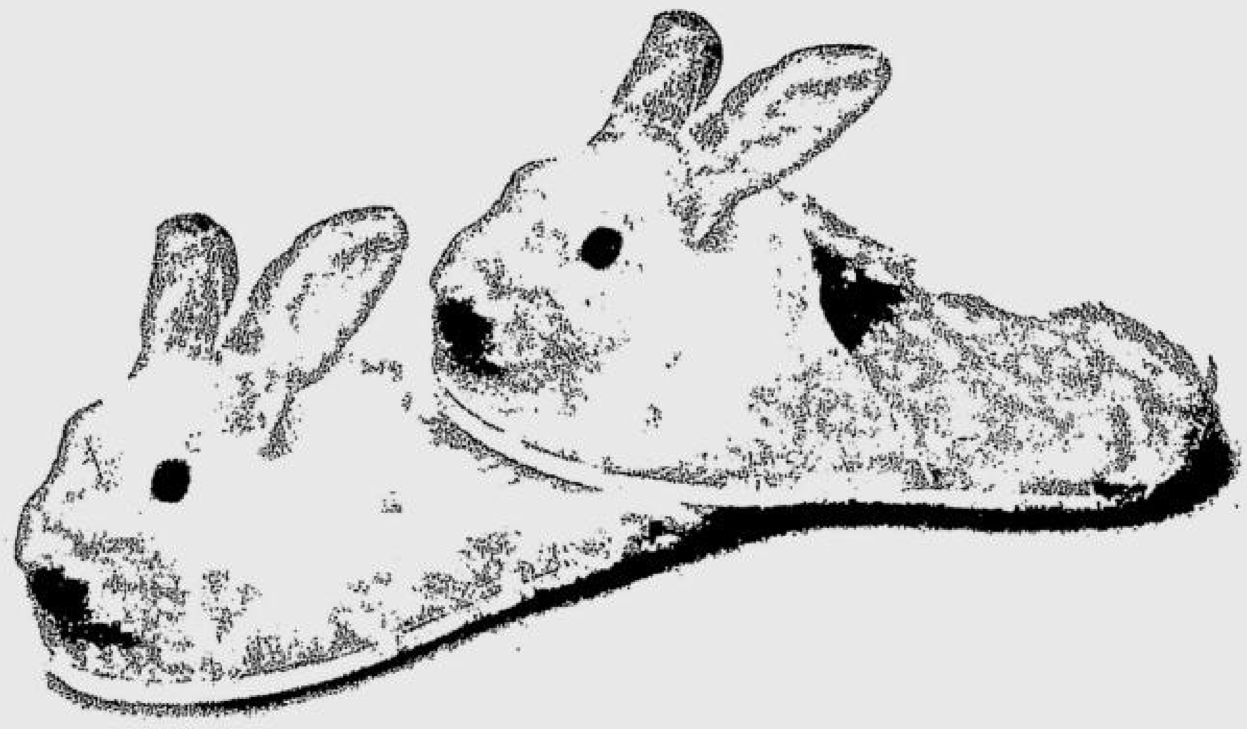

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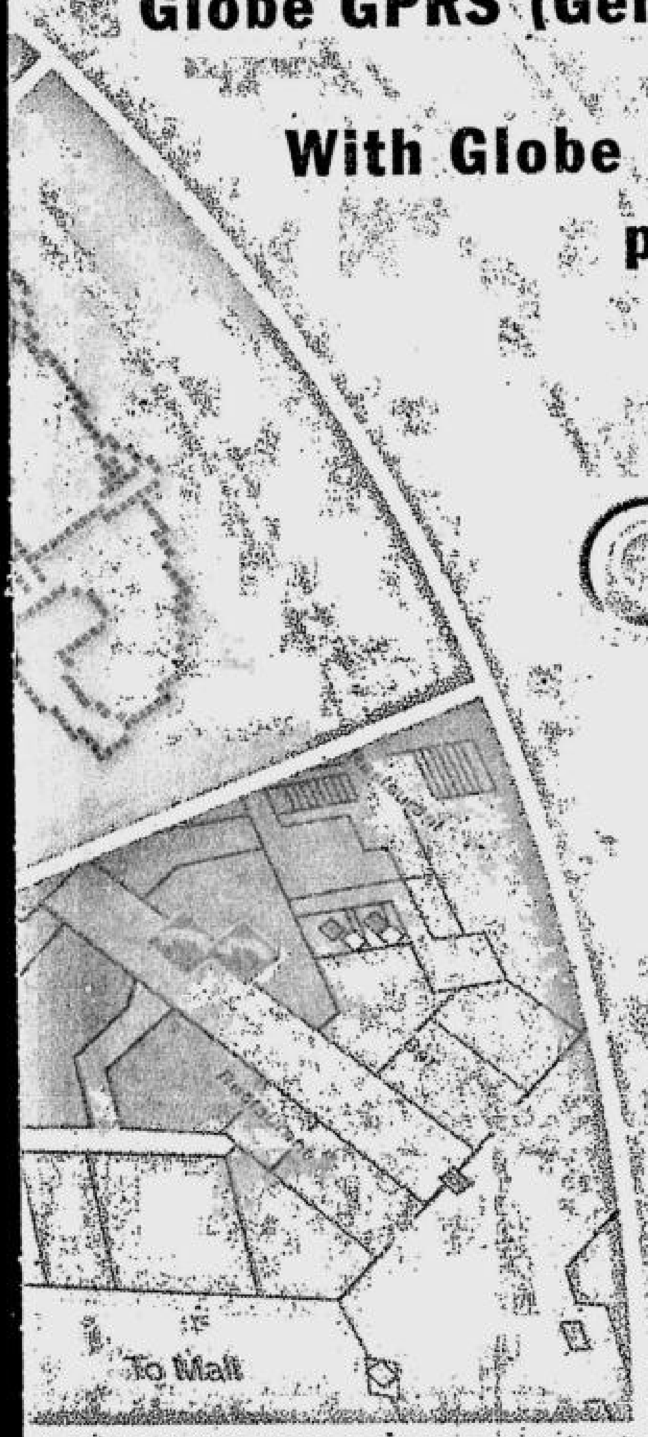

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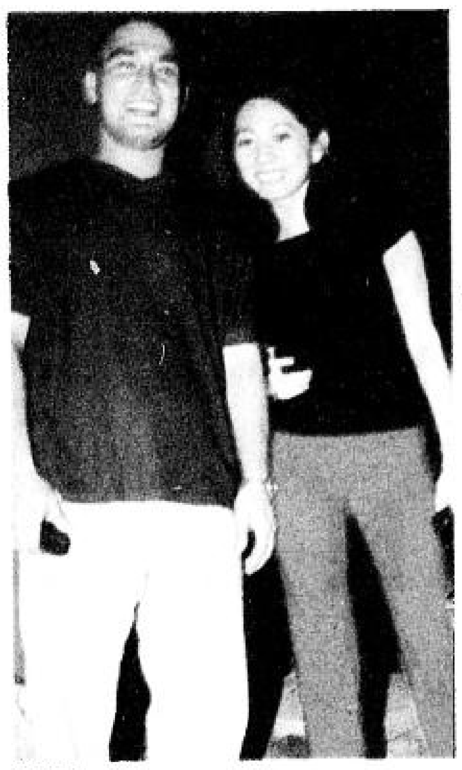

TEE for two

CHILL-OUT chic

WEARING an attitude

BACK-TO BACK

Wolfgang fans strut their stuff in Cebu

SIX SENSE... sation!

Photos By Johann Longakit Jr.

OUR roving camera found itself in Cebu City this time, searching for fashion statements from the South.

There was nothing but high energy at the GenText event last weekend, where Wolfgang took centerstage at The Courtyard, right in the middle of The Village, Cebu's hottest nightspot.

As Basti's croons and powerful howls sent the audience into a frenzy, we kept our eyes open for people who screamed attitude—with a big A.

Although Cebu fashion is very similar to Manila's identical twin syndrome—with a lot of people dressed the same way—there were those who stood out. They had style, they had confidence and most important of all, they possessed attitude. A clear individualism.

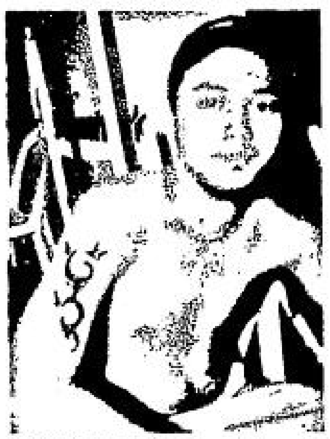
Ladies and gentlemen, the glam look in Cebu.

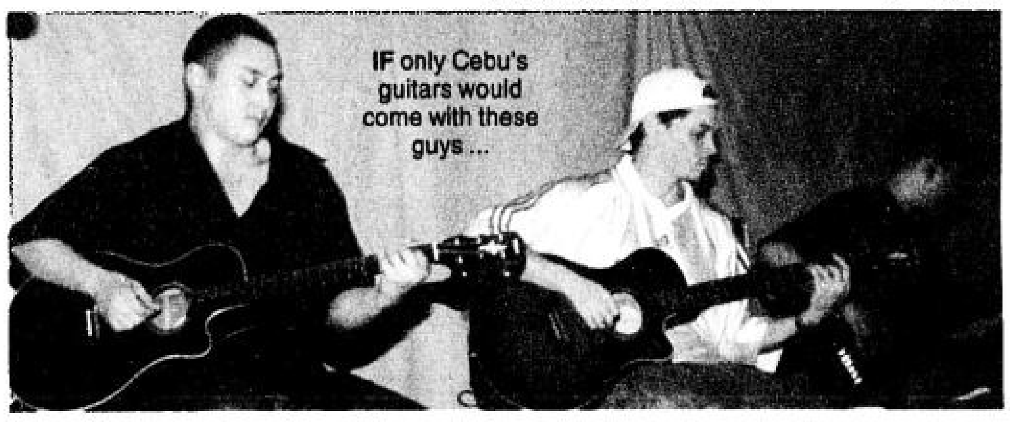
PP and MATP

For those featured here, please e-mail us at ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph and give us your names and e-mail addresses—we'll send you giveaways

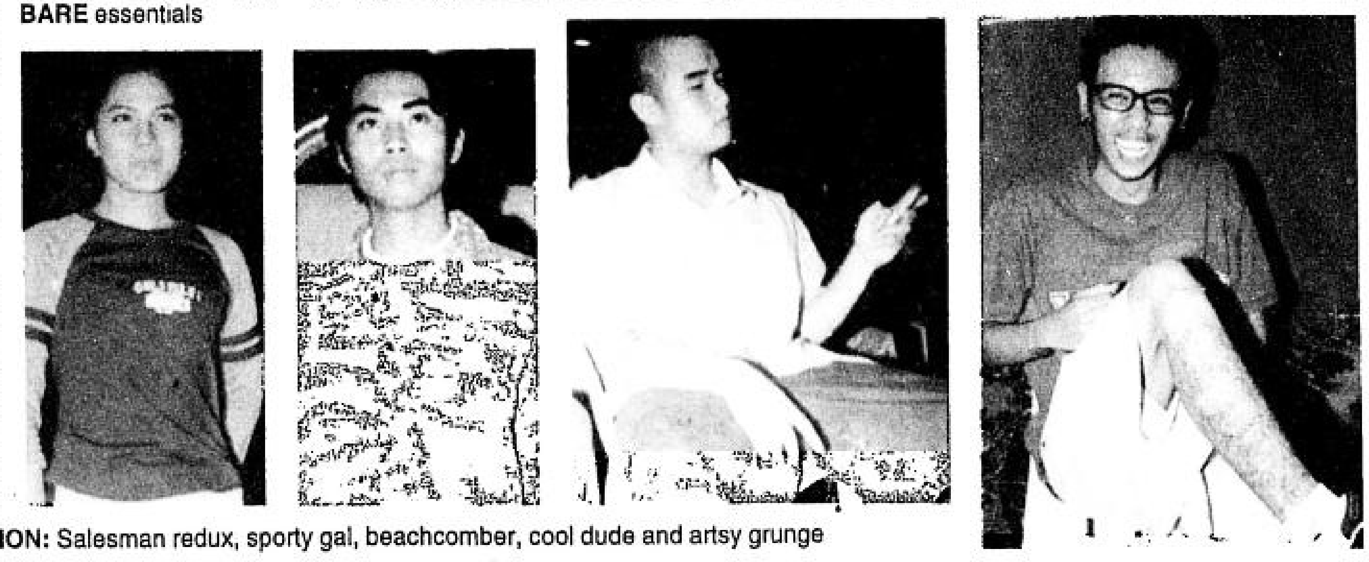
WITH STRINGS attached

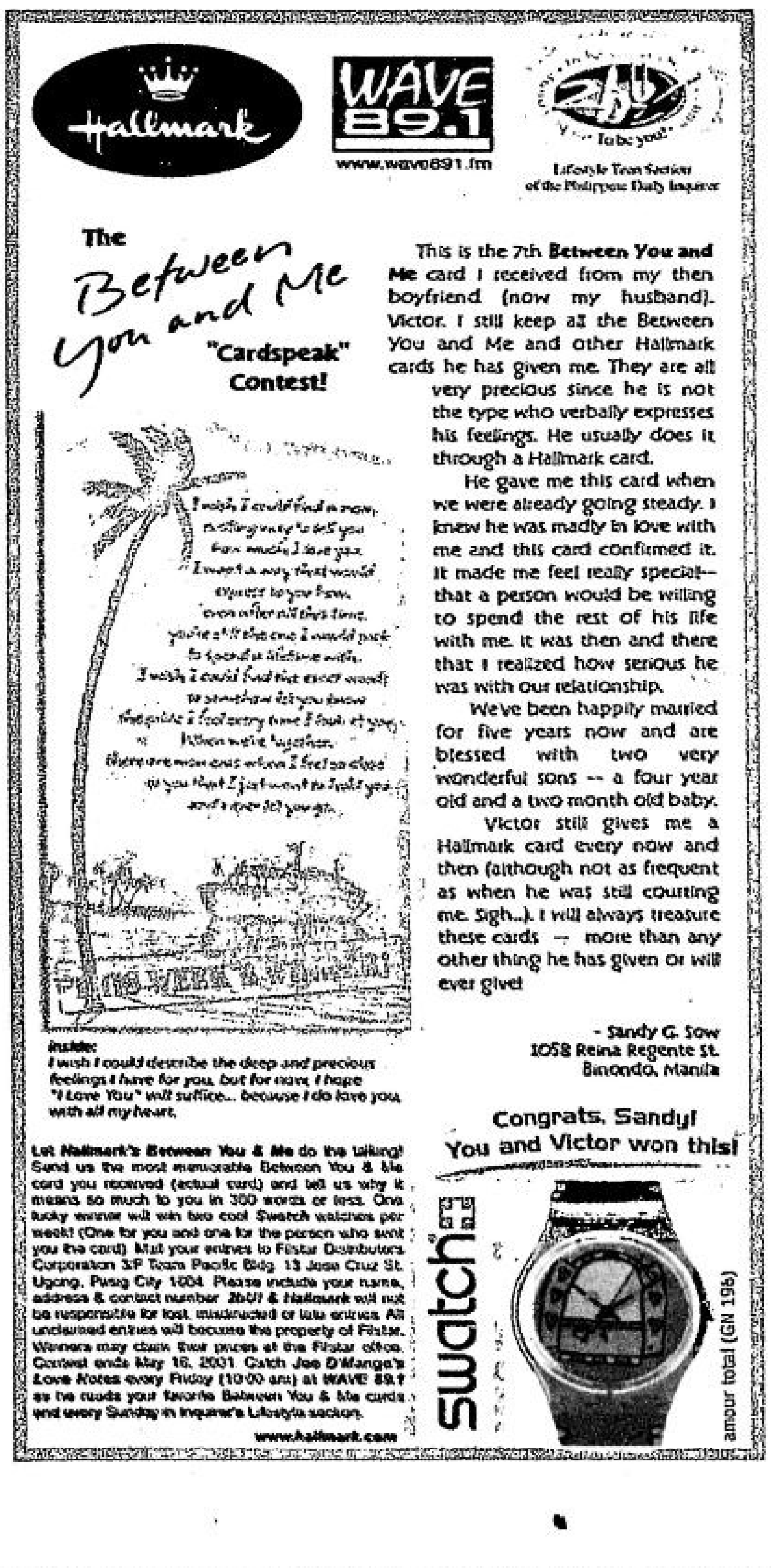
HAIR, there and everywhere


BARE essentials


IF only Cebu's guitars would come with these guys ...

PARTY girls on a roll


MIX 'N' MATCH FASHION: Salesman redux, sporty gal, beachcomber, cool dude and artsy grunge


Hallmark

WAVE 89.1 www.wave891.fm

2bU To be you! Lifestyle Teen Section of the Philippine Daily Inquirer

The Between You and Me "Cardspeak" Contest!

I wish I could find a new, exciting way to tell you how much I love you. I want a way that would express to you how, even after all this time, you're still the one I would pick to spend a lifetime with. I wish I could find the exact words to somehow let you know the glow I feel every time I look at you, When we're together, there are moments when I feel so close to you that I just want to hold you and never let you go.

Inside:
I wish I could describe the deep and precious feelings I have for you, but for now, I hope "I Love You" will suffice... because I do love you, with all my heart.

This is the 7th **Between You and Me** card I received from my then boyfriend (now my husband), Victor. I still keep all the Between You and Me and other Hallmark cards he has given me. They are all very precious since he is not the type who verbally expresses his feelings. He usually does it through a Hallmark card.

He gave me this card when we were already going steady. I knew he was madly in love with me and this card confirmed it. It made me feel really special-- that a person would be willing to spend the rest of his life with me. It was then and there that I realized how serious he was with our relationship.

We've been happily married for five years now and are blessed with two very wonderful sons -- a four year old and a two month old baby.

Victor still gives me a Hallmark card every now and then (although not as frequent as when he was still courting me. Sigh...). I will always treasure these cards -- more than any other thing he has given or will ever give!

- Sandy G. Sow
1058 Reina Regente St.
Binondo, Manila

Congrats, Sandy! You and Victor won this!

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www.hallmark.com

She's still in love with a New Jersey dude who's now ignoring her

Carlos Garchitorena & September Mahino

DEAR Sep and Caloy,

I've been in love with someone whom I've never met. Although I've only seen him in the Net, we became lovers after only a few weeks of chatting. Although we once talked on the phone, our communication is also done entirely via chatting and e-mails. He is from New Jersey.

It's been a long time since we talked so I e-mailed him and asked what was wrong. But he didn't reply. I don't know why he just stopped loving me and now it's been a month that I haven't heard from him. The worst thing was when he changed his screen name and he didn't tell me either. I only knew about it from his friend. But until now I still love him and miss him so much.

Help me! What will I do?

MISS SO CONFUSED

Want to hear something funny? Embarrassed as I am, I have to admit I went through something similar. Yes, I got hooked on chatting for quite a while last year, and I even "pushed" another friend into the habit. Yes, there was also a guy whom I constantly talked to. And yes, after a couple of months, he just ignored me.

For the record, he acted like that because he couldn't take a little nasty joke. But I've already kicked him into e-oblivion where he belongs.

The difference between us is I never fooled myself into thinking I was in love with this chatroom stranger. He claimed to look like Nick Lachey; ahaha, I don't even like Nick Lachey. He was funny and crude, but although I indulged him sometimes, I never really bought what he said. That's why when he dropped me like a stale potato, I didn't get all mopey and miserable.

You, my dear, on the other hand, have too much time in your hands. This New Jersey dude didn't stop loving you. He never did, no matter what he told you. You see, the opportunity to lie and tell BS is what draws most people to chatrooms. This New Jersey dude is an expert on that so when you got a bit clingy, he got bored and just up and left.

I don't mean to sound mean, but you need to peel yourself away from the keyboard for a while. You might really be in love with this New Jersey dude but he clearly has moved on. Stop bugging him and his friend because it won't do you any good. He could be laughing at your attempts to talk to him right now, you know. Don't give him that much satisfaction. Return to the tangible world and find yourself another distraction.

SEP

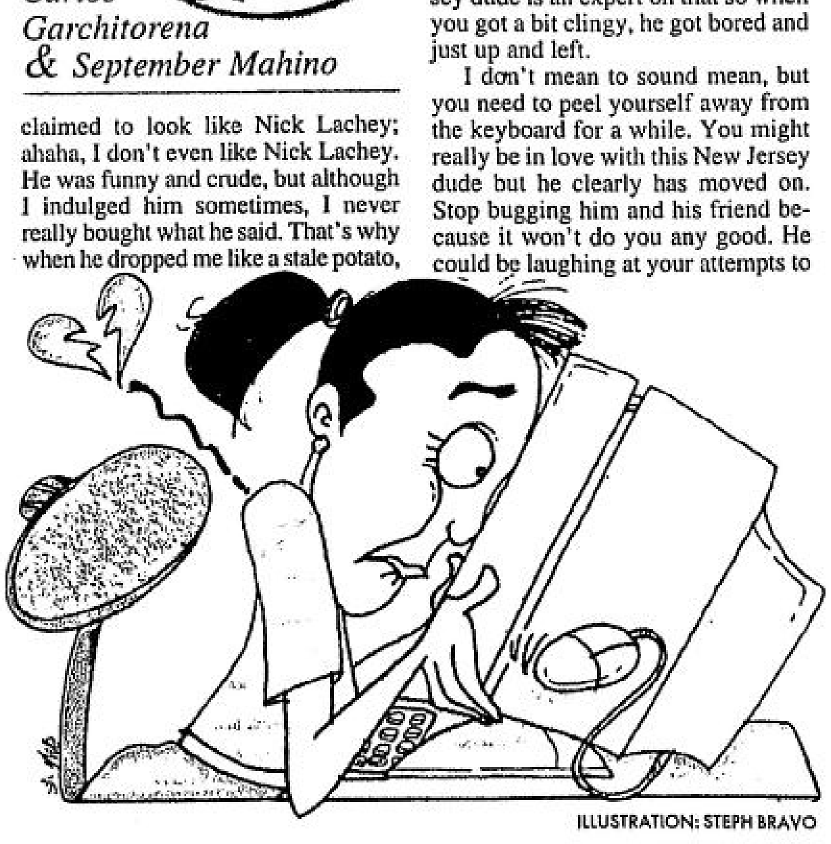
ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

The Internet is such a useful model of man's ingenuity and imagination. Thank heavens for people like you that keep us all grounded in reality. You never know what you're going to get, the saying goes.

Does love really exist in the realm of the insubstantial? Does a goldfish know it lives in a fishbowl? Perhaps the goldfish is content, pleasantly surprised every time a sudden burst of bubbles changes the scape of its existence every five seconds.

People, on the other hand, peer into the electronic fishbowl, searching for answers to questions perhaps crafted to confuse and amuse. But what is the difference? We all live in the matrix on one level or another, Einstein will concur. I'm convinced Richard Bach is, indeed, privy to the workings of the contemporary Christ.

Oh, the Internet! Madam Bola's *perlas na bilog*, vague and fuzzy at its most intelligent. If you don't adjust the contrast and leave the tangible out in the space you call your mind, you just might escape unscathed. Don't stay too close to the monitor, honey, lest the radioactive image of Mr. USA, New Jersey be a brand on your forehead as you fall asleep in the moving arms of technology.

CALOY

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The look of Spring-Summer 2001

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

IT'S springtime once again in the United States and to spare you from blowing good money on the wrong trendy things, I am here to report to you what's in for Spring-Summer 2001 (March to August).

First, you would be glad to know that unlike the 1990s where fashion changed every two months, I see a repeat of last year. In fact, most of what's in is already in our closets. Don't throw the clothes, shoes and accessories from 1999-2000 because it looks like most of them are staying. Yup, it looks like we will be saving money this year as I see repeat performances.

Clothes. Long, floral slip dresses in different colors of the rainbow, others beaded and some not. Skirts are still predominantly below the knee and vintage is still to die for. Unlike the past summers, black is now proclaimed an unbeatable classic. Capri pants are now called crop pants and worn with trusty peasant blouses. Suits for office are orange, lavender and pink, whether they are skirts and blazers or pantsuits.

Shoes. All styles advertised are already in our closets. Yes, open toes are here to stay. There are high-heeled slides everywhere: with stilettos, stacked and wedge heels. They are strappy, solid, thong, geometric, beaded, etc. Colors are the basic neutrals, no more of the frivolous technicolor shades you would have to buy outfits for and have to toss out at the end of three months. Flat slides are back as well for casual slacks and sundresses, but they come in colors aside from black and brown, like gingham red and blue or solid red leather.

STEPH BRAVO

Bags. Like the shoes, they are mostly neutral in shades of camel, beige, cream, brown and black. Red adds an unexpected wow factor, especially for beige outfits with matching sandals. Style: mini boxes, mostly rectangular with stiff handle too long for a Kelly bag but too short for a shoulder bag. If worn as a shoulder bag, end of purse reaches top ribs.

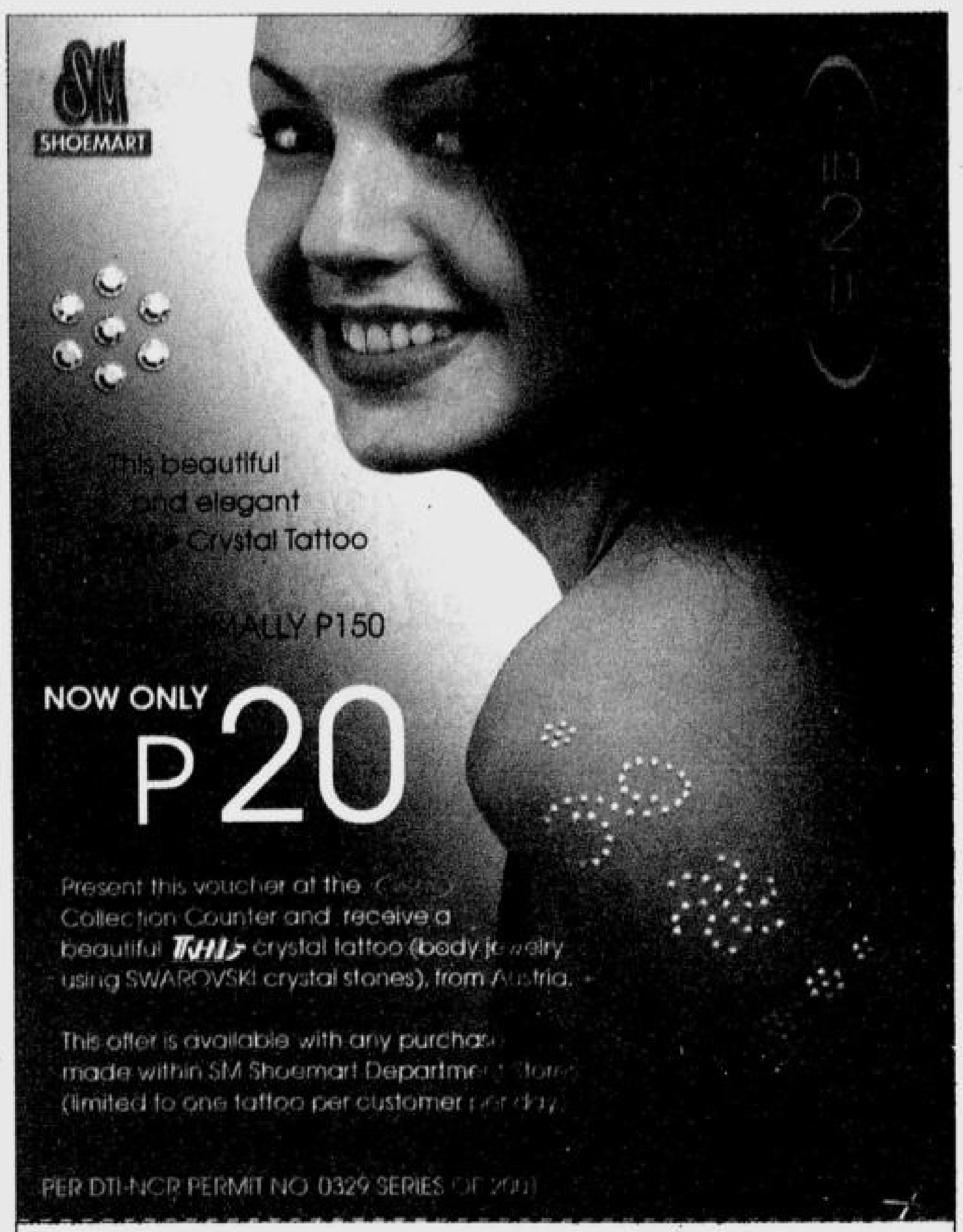
Watches. The latest is the effect of wearing men's sports watches on women's wrist—chunky and metallic, to be worn with corporate suits and casual pants.

Makeup. Those who love the nude/natural look rejoice because this has stood the test of the decade and remains to be the popular magazine's choice. Browns and beiges with different undertones prevail for eyes, cheeks and lips. Trendy shades for the next six months for lips and cheeks are: melon, lavender, pink (from baby to fuchsia) and orange (from peach to vermilion). Foundations are dewy matte, lips are glossy (matte is a no-no) and cheeks are the soft natural flushed look. Occasional photos include lizard green and violet eye shadow and purple lipstick. Last season's red may stay only if worn sheer and looks no more conspicuous than gloss. Tip: Apply lip balm from a pot or tube on lips and glide red lipstick over lightly for the sheer look.

Hair. Finally, what all beauty gurus have been preaching, these fashion mavens finally get. Long, sleek, flat, shiny hair is a must only if it's your hair's natural texture. The magazines say there is more than one "it" hairstyle this season. If your hair is curly, try a curly medium-length bob like the new one sported by Nicole Kidman, Gillian Anderson and Lara Flynn Boyle. Residue style from 2000: Pulled up hair at the back with long bangs flattened to your forehead. Warning: Not to be worn by those who feel they have big cheeks or a wide jaw line.

Note: Last September, I wrote a lipstick article and mentioned beige lips made famous by Angelina Jolie. For those still interested, Jolie used MAC Folio, a taupe colored lipstick. For those who don't have naturally red lips like Angelina, the effect will be like medium-toned concealer on one's mouth (I tried it—ugh!). If you want to achieve the same look as hers, get rosier toned pale beiges.

For any questions, or products you want to road-test, write to Makeover 911, PDI Lifestyle or fax at 897-4805



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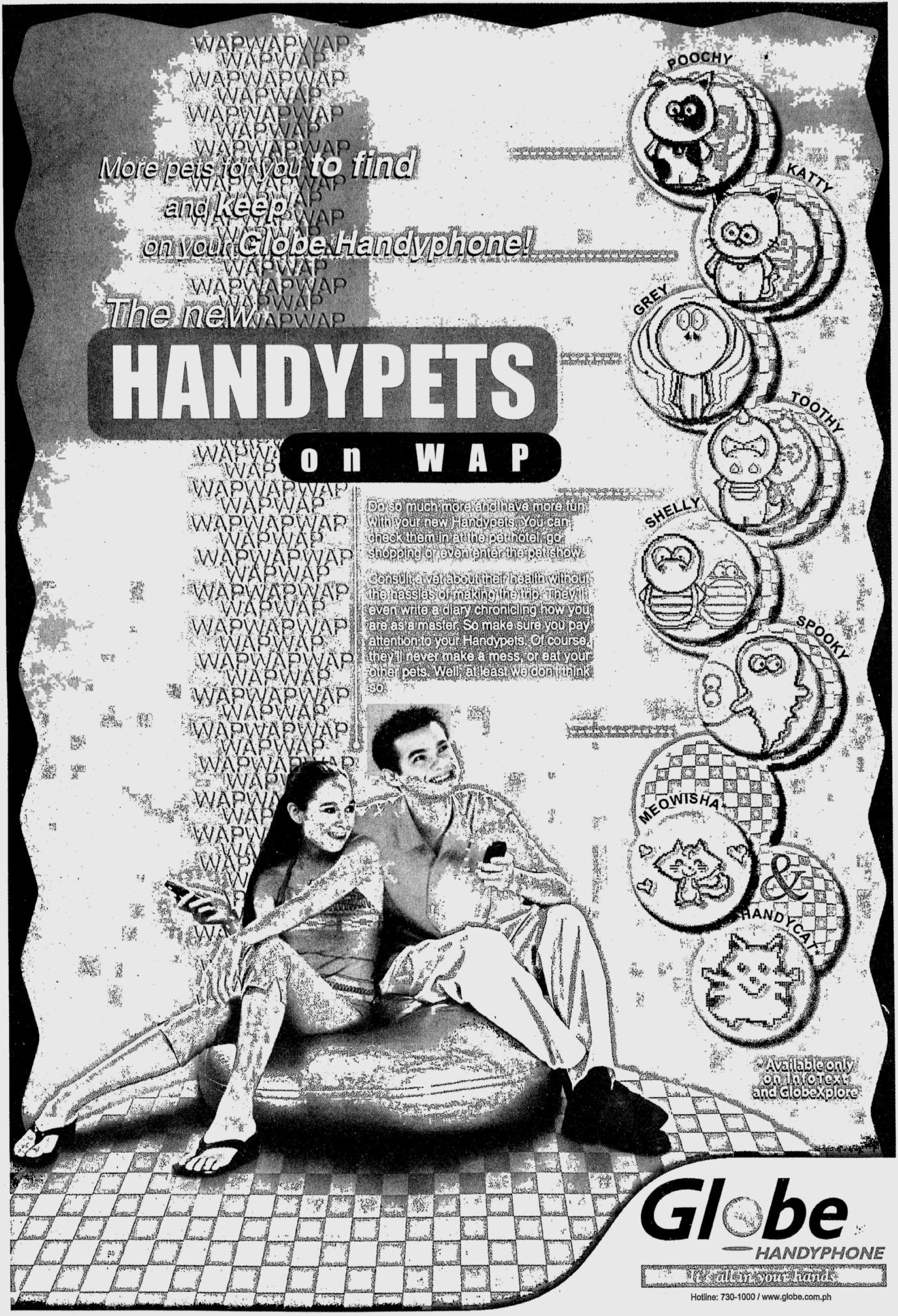

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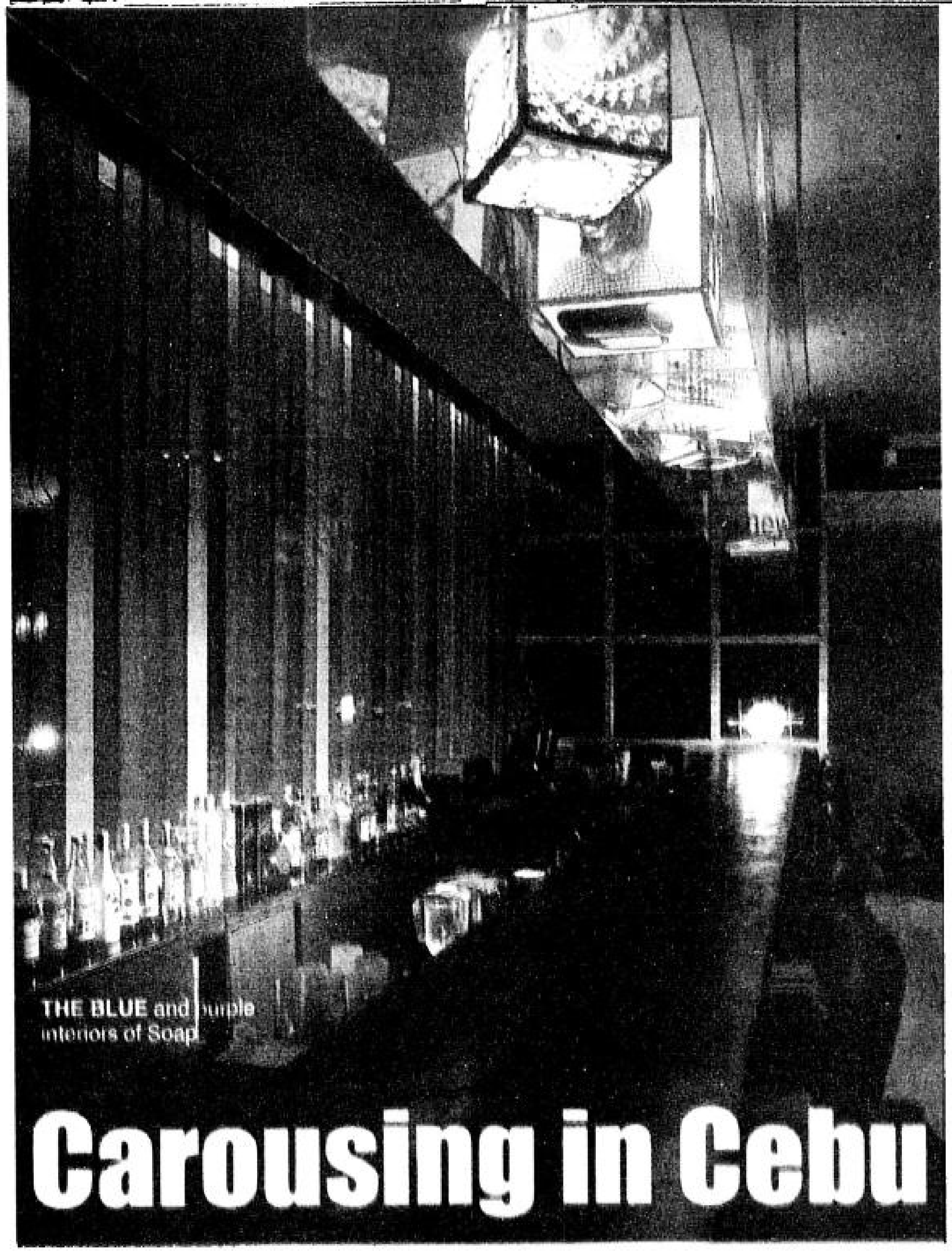

THE BLUE and purple interiors of Soap

Carousing in Cebu

When it comes to partying, the Queen City of the South reigns supreme

BY PAM PASTOR
PHOTOS BY JOHANN LONGAKIT JR.

The Village
CCTC Cebu City

IF you want to be seen in Cebu, Leo Sanchez and a few locals said, "The Village is the place to go to."

Surveying the different bars and restaurants they had lined up, I said, "So, this is like Cebu's Malate?" Although many of them agreed, two said, "No! The Fort." But since The Fort is almost dead (although according to very reliable sources, it will be resurrected soon) and The Village is definitely alive, then I still prefer to think of it as Cebu's Malate area.

The name is no problem. It's called The Village because it's a one-stop place. Because everything you would want on a night-out is there.

Yo! Latino, Soap and Club Fuel
The Village
CCTC Cebu City

Mario Colmenares is a man of great concepts. The transition of the three places listed above strikes me as nothing but pure genius. You'd go for dinner at Yo! Latino and enjoy the music. Then you'd want to cap your meal with a nice dessert, and wait till you start digesting the good meal you've had. That's what Soap is for, the chill-out bar, which is right next door. And when you're heated up, you have Club Fuel where you can dance till early morning. It can even become a cycle. After dancing, you can move back to Soap where you can catch your breath and actually have a conversation. Then eat at Yo! Latino. And then start over again.

The interior of the three bars, which are managed by Mario and his partner James Gaite, are as diverse. Yo! Latino is all orange-y, Soap (and I love this) is a calming mixture of blue and purple and Club Fuel is a fiery red. You can get drinks in all three places, Asian food and desserts in Soap, and different meals—from Mexican to Cuban—in Yo! Latino. Fuel opened in November last year while Soap and Yo! opened in December.

The idea for Fuel started because of Mario's love for music. "During that time, bars in Cebu played R&B —*kung ano yung maririnig mo sa radyo*." He decided to take a gamble, by introducing something different—techno-, house- and UK-based music. Soon, radio stations started to play the kind of music Mario played in the club. Since then, Fuel has become almost a tradition. In fact, Cebuanos say, "You haven't been to Cebu if you haven't been to Fuel."

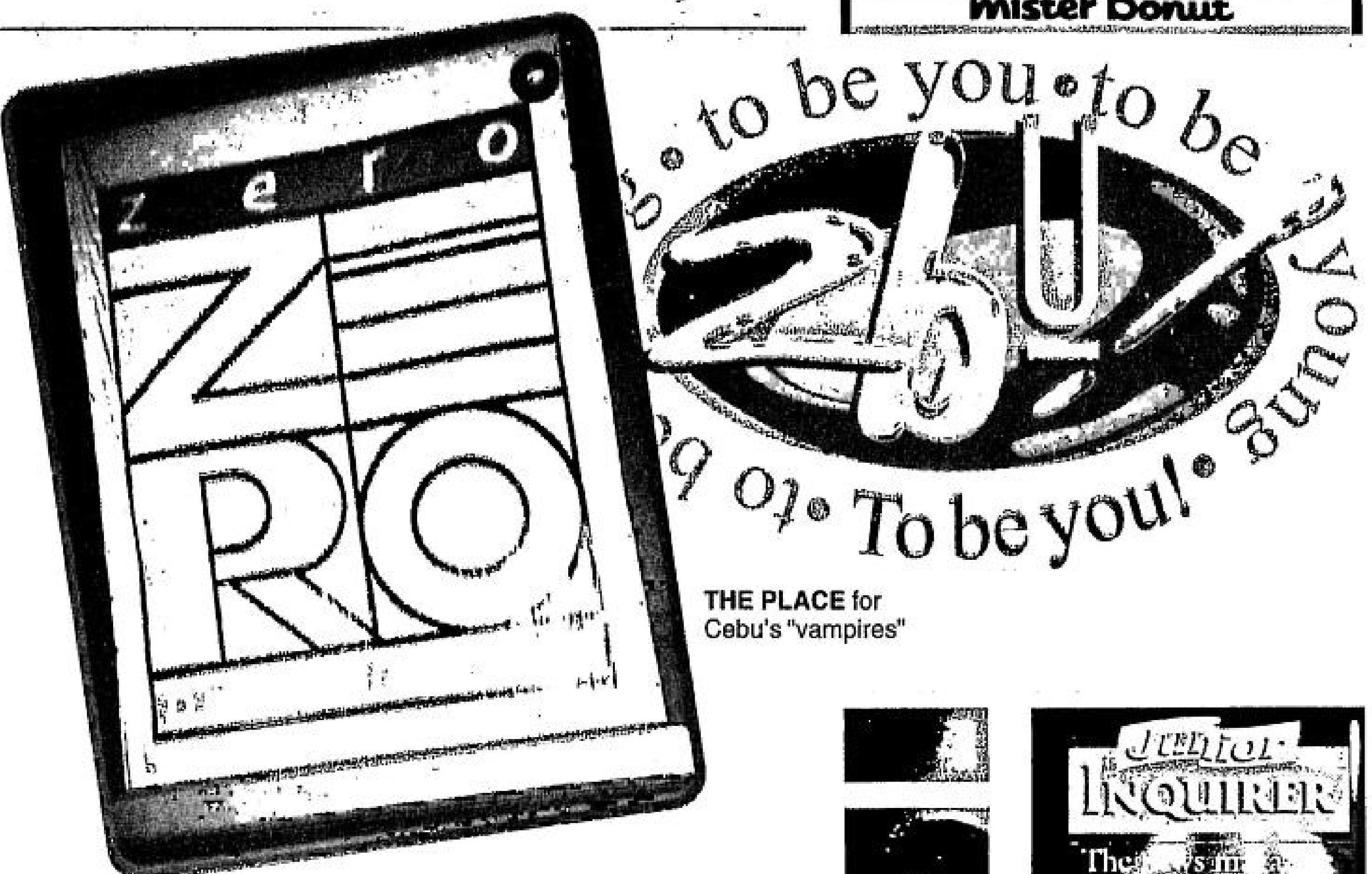
Fuel has been home to many big events. On April 27, Mario will hold the "Boracay Goes to Fuel" party. This, he says, is an event to watch out for. There will be white sand, lifeguards and girls in bikini (sounds like a major party).

Ask Mario about the names of his bars and he'd shrug and say, "We just like them." Regulars in these venues have given their own meaning to the names. "A car needs fuel to run. If you want to run in Cebu, go to Fuel," says one Manila-based regular.

Yo! Latino is open from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. every day, Soap on weekends from 6 p.m.-6 a.m., Fuel on Wednesdays to Saturdays from 9 p.m. till there are people.

CAROUSING/ p.D2

FUSION of good food and music at Yo! Latino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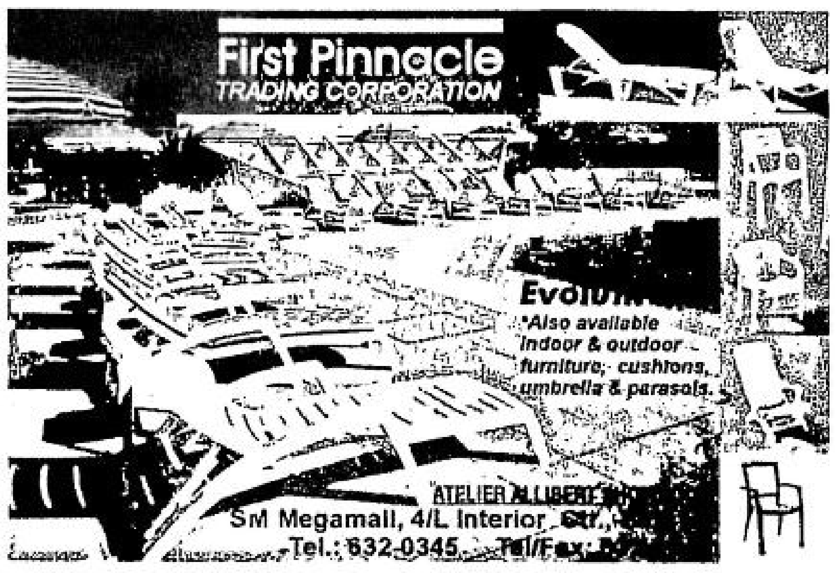
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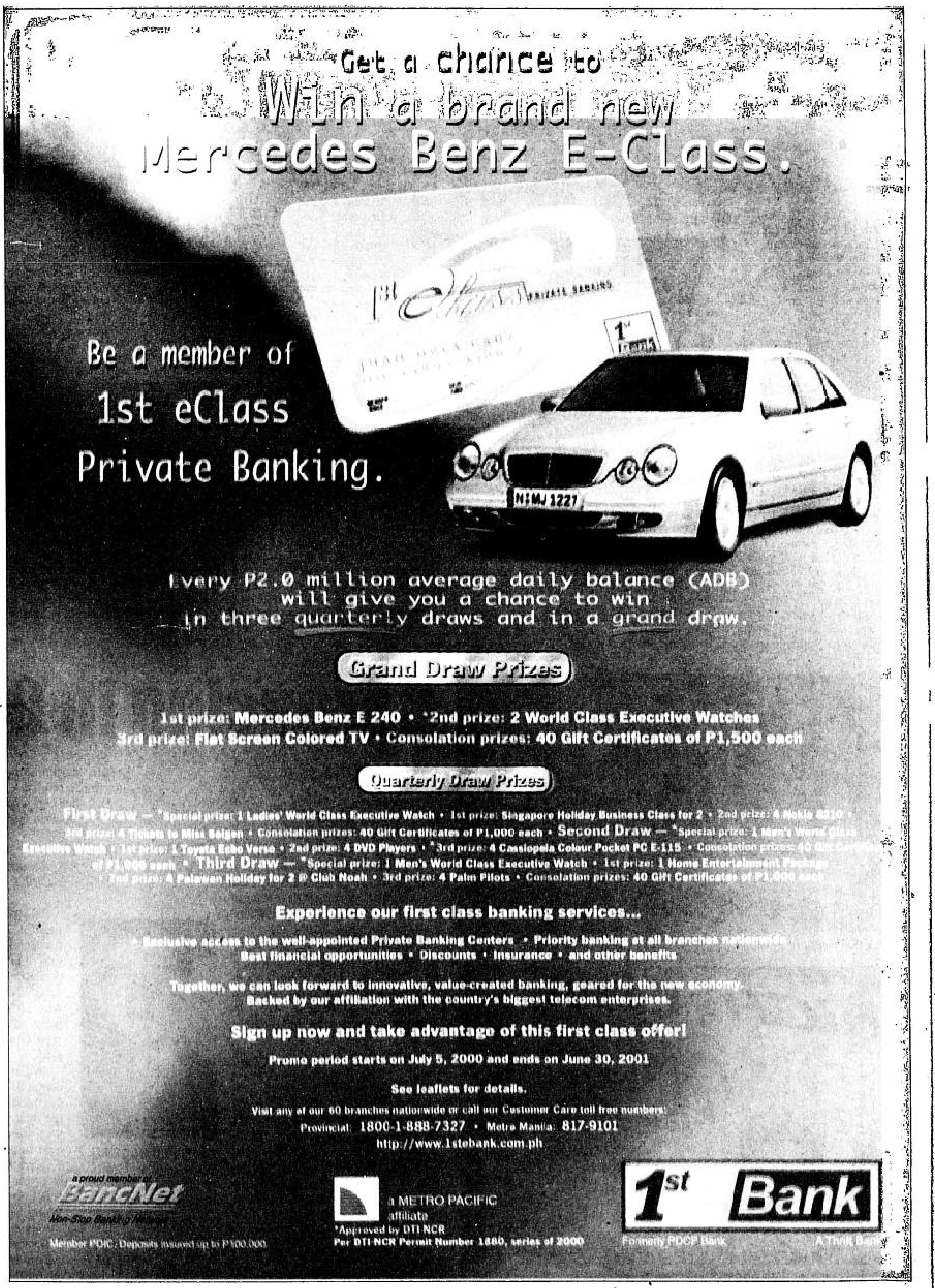
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Where to eat in Cebu

IF you find yourself in the Queen City of the South anytime soon, get your palate ready for the adventure of a lifetime. Aside from the *lechon* and the infamous barbecue stalls, Cebu offers a wide variety of good food that will leave you licking your lips. And the big, spot-hitting bonus—food in Cebu is quite inexpensive. So splurge. For once, forget that diet. Live. Your taste buds will love you for it.

Patio Isabel
Old Banilad Road
Banilad, Cebu City
tel. (032) 231-6075

Patio Isabel is a very Filipino restaurant. It reminds me of Kamayan, with a more old-fashioned feel. The food is superb, I was ooh-ing and aah-ing all throughout the meal. The aroma of good food wafted all over. We had a whole feast in front of us. *Sinigang*, *tortang talong* (eggplant omelet), fish, baked mussels, steamed shrimps, fresh *lumpia*, squid, sliced green mangoes with *bagoong*. The table was also laden with all kinds of sauces.

Since I love anything crispy, the *chicharon* was a winner for me, along with the tasty, crispy beef ribs and *nilasing na hipon*. The flavorful chicken pandan (chicken parts wrapped with pandan leaves) was a delight.

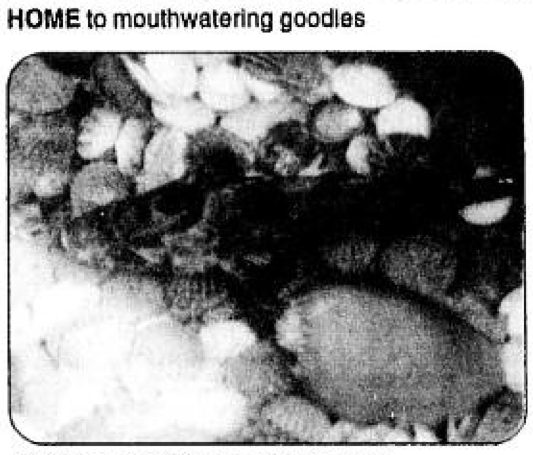
The desserts were also good. The *leche flan* was rich, but not too sweet. Even their iced tea was good. Mozart recommends their buco pandan shake. I loved their *guinomis* (*sago* and *pinipig* in coconut milk).

To my pleasant surprise, everything on the menu was very inexpensive. Only a few items went over P100. Families may even order set buffets for P480, P580 or P680.

Now, back in Manila, I still find myself dreaming about the garlic rice and chicken pandan.

Fast-food chicken just doesn't cut it anymore.

HOME to mouthwatering goodies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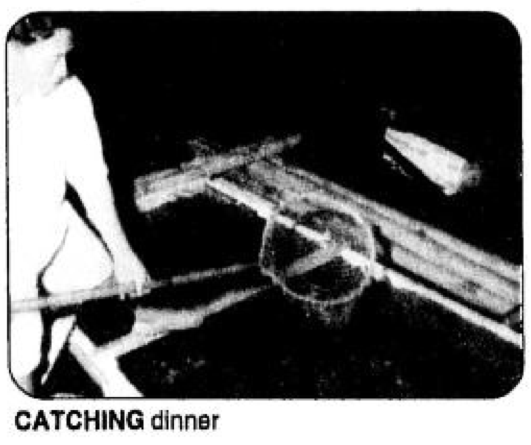

CATCHING dinner

Yo! Latino
The Village
CCTC Cebu City
tel. (032) 412-7272

Dab smack in the middle of The Village is Yo! Latino, a bar-restaurant that lives up to its name. With the orange interiors, wooden tables and chairs, lit candles and Latino music playing, you would almost expect Antonio Banderas to come popping in any time.

My first visit to this restaurant, which is run by food connoisseur James Gaite, was late Wednesday night—and it was almost full. There were a lot of people outside, dining al fresco.

My next visit, on a Friday night, was for a full-blast dinner. There were even more people. Eat we did—a lot. We ordered four different kinds of appetizers. The Calamares Fritos (P80) was really tender and was served with good tartar sauce—definitely not the kind that comes from a bottle. The Gambas Al Mario (P120) was a hit for the spice hounds. The Champignones Al Ajillo (P80)—mushrooms cooked in a variety of spices—was also good. My favorite appetizer was the *quesadilla* (P120)—slices of soft tortilla filled with mozzarella cheese and *chorizo* bits served with barbecue nachos. It was bursting with flavor. You wouldn't be able to stop at just one.

While many decided to try the spareribs (P220), I chose the Lemon Grass Chicken (P140) to be different. It was served with the restaurant's special rice and a really, really spicy sauce. The chicken was tender—the flavor was almost delicate. I loved it. The others gave the *callos* and the *lengua* the thumbs-up.

You may order dessert from Soap, the chill-out bar next door. Although their crepes were a bit small, the tiramisu was a big hit.

Yo! Latino is open from 6 a.m.-2 a.m. every day.

Blue Ripples
Buot, Punta Engano
Mactan Island, Cebu
tel. (032) 493-8510

Some people can be very meticulous about food. They want only the freshest and the finest there is. If you fall under this category, you'll love Blue Ripples.

Not exactly the easiest place to access, the long drive to this restaurant is bumpy. But the food is worth the rocky travel.

Once you get off the car, you can smell the sea in the night breeze. After a rickety walk down a narrow wooden plank, you stand on a wooden landing built atop the Mactan Channel. Surrounding you are netted water areas filled with different sea creatures. Fish, crabs, shrimps, shellfishes—and yes, they are alive. They are swimming, they are snapping, they are floating—unaware that they'd be your meal for the night.

You choose, they catch it and you tell them how to cook it.

This, of course, is the more expensive way to do it. That night, crabs went for P450 per kilo, shellfishes were P60 per order and the fish was P750 per kilo. If you want to save a few pesos, you can always order from the menu. But doing it this way is an experience.

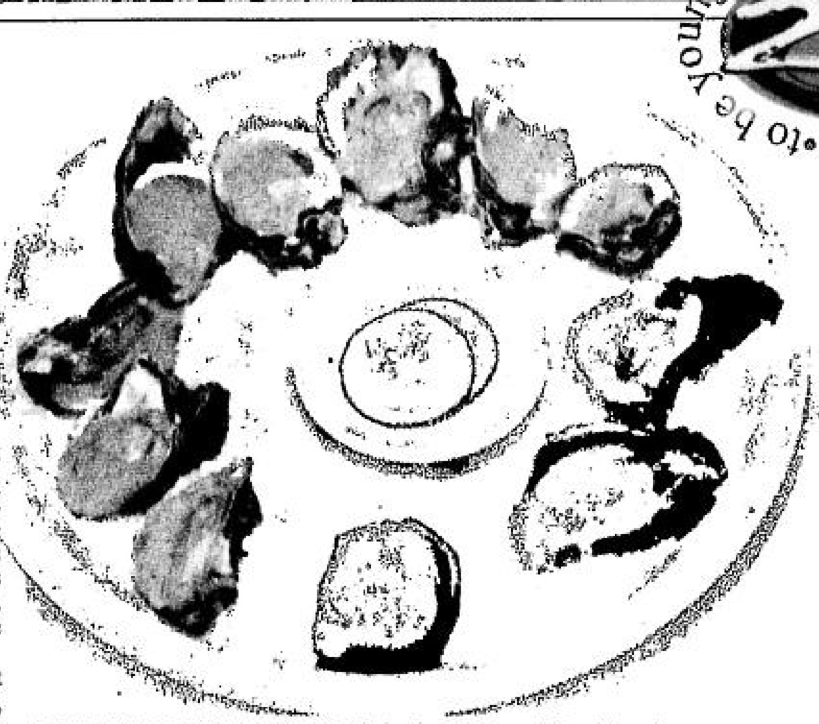
You can choose between eating on a floating bamboo raft or at the restaurant itself, which actually looks like a big old house with scenic windows.

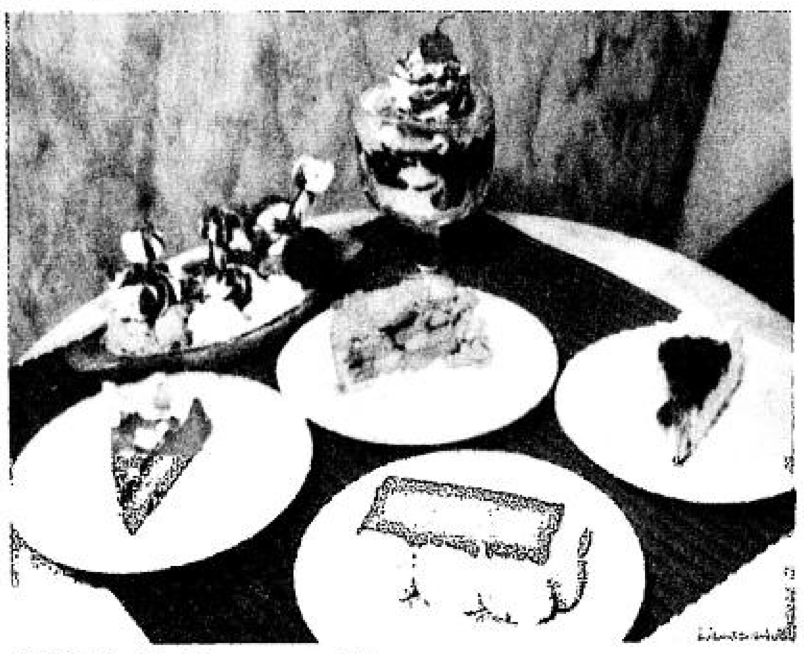
We opted for the house. It's more practical, they said, in case someone wanted to use the bathroom.

Since the place was empty that night, save for us and a few others who were dining on the rafts, the service was really good.

Despite the restaurant being famous for live seafood, the menu has evidently not been neglected. There are so many choices that your head would spin. They have endless lists of beef, chicken, pork, seafood and vegetable dishes. They also have noodles and snacks for light eaters. Now that we definitely weren't.

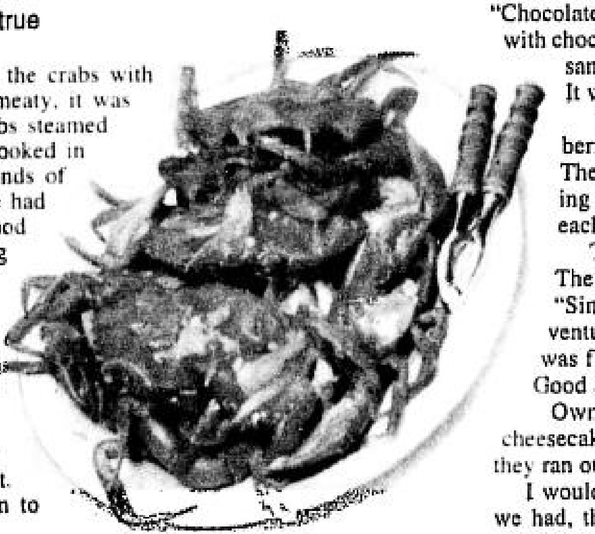
The clams we ordered were gigantic—I even brought home a shell to show off to my grandma. The grilled pork (*inihaw na baboy*) was good—very tasty. We had *sinigang* and *chicharon*. We also had *lapu-lapu* cooked in two ways—grilled and deep-fried. The fish was so fresh—I still close my eyes now to remember it. Cynthia was right when she said, "It just slides down. *Walang* aftertaste."


BURSTING WITH FLAVOR. Baked oysters at Tiya Nena's


SUGAR junkies' dream come true

Poise forgotten, we attacked the crabs with our bare hands. They were so meaty, it was heaven. We had half of the crabs steamed with garlic and the other half cooked in chili sauce. Everyone made sounds of pleasure as we ate nonstop. We had fresh mangoes for dessert. The food was so rich but the good thing about it was that even if you ate a lot, you didn't feel like you were about to burst.

The whole meal—and it was a feast, no understatement there—only cost us P3,400—and all six of us were big eaters. You wouldn't get seafood that fresh in Manila for that amount. There you go. One more reason to love Cebu.

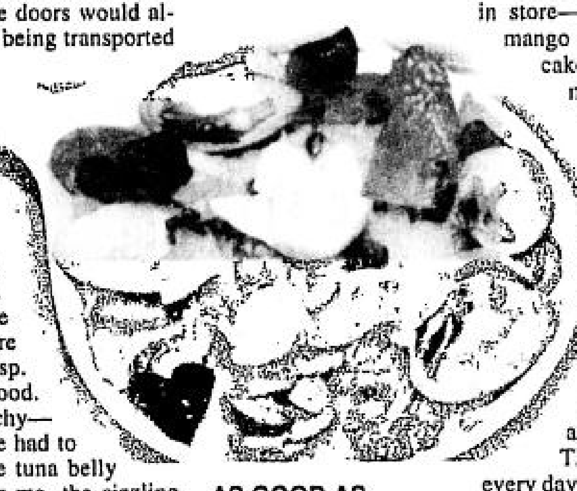

CRABS in chili and garlic sauce at Blue Ripples

PHOTOS BY JOHANN LONGAKIT JR.

Tiya Nena's
G/F Ayala Center Cebu
Cebu Business Park, Cebu City
tel. (032) 232-6939

Tiya Nena's is a quaint place that would take you back in time. Walking through the doors would almost make you feel like you were being transported back to the Spanish era. Makes you wish you walked in wearing your *baro't saya*. Even the bathroom has a very old-fashioned feel.

I was sipping my green mango shake while waiting for the food—it was good and tart. To start another memorable meal, we ordered crispy *kangkong* (P85). Soon, the entrées began to arrive and we had yet another feast before us. The *kangkong* was light and crisp. The *sinigang na bangus* was good. The crispy *pata* (P240) was crunchy—and the meat was really fresh. We had to go for seconds. We also tried the tuna belly (P235) and *panga* (P235) but for me, the sizzling *bangus* (P165) was a big hit. The sauce was rich and garlic-y. The *chicharon bulaklak* (P125) was crisp without the usual oil overload. I tried three new things at Tiya Nena's. The *humba*, which is similar to *adobo*, and the *bihod* (P95)—fish eggs—that were a bit salty. For the first time, I tried oysters—something I never got the courage to do in Manila. It was a contradiction—tender but bursting with flavor. A whole platter of baked oysters lying on a bed of salt cost only P105.


AS GOOD AS GRANDMA'S. Paella Marinara at Tiya Nena's

If you think the food here is inexpensive, it gets even better. GenTxt members get even more discounts.

My top pick at Tiya Nena's, though, was their Paella Marinera. It reminded me so much of my grandma's *paella*, which I haven't tasted in a *looong* time. I was in grade school when she last cooked that, I think.

To cap the meal, we ordered Pinipig Delight, an invention of the restaurant's owners. This is their version of *guinomis*, I think. A tall glass of coconut milk with *pinipig* and *matamis na bao*. It was rich—so rich that I wasn't able to finish my share.

The Dessert Factory
Mahogany Court
Archbishop Reyes Avenue, Cebu City
tel. (032) 233-9977

Here's something major for those born with a sweet tooth.

I swear, the only reason we went to The Dessert Factory was my companions' desire to get a caffeine fix. Okay, and maybe a little ice cream. But when we saw the goodies on display and the list of cakes on the menu, all thoughts of coffee were forgotten. We ended up having a dessert bonanza.

We ordered slices of cakes and pies—and yes, ice cream, too. It was a wicked, wicked night.

I ordered a Factory Pudge for myself, which, according to the menu is (brace yourself): "Chocolate and vanilla ice cream strewn with marshmallows, toasted nuts, homemade chocolate syrup, whipped cream, a maraschino cherry and our very own homemade hot fudge sauce." Mmmmm. That's all I can say.

And when the ice cream arrived, I was not disappointed. It was bigger than I thought, and generously topped with all the goodies listed. Every bite had at least three marshmallows in it. All for a measly P105. Amazing. To merely say that it was good would not do it justice.

Cynthia and Jonji ordered a Steamboat each. "Chocolate, vanilla and mocha ice cream topped with chocolate syrup, lots of whipped cream, choco sandwich cookies and choco sticks." Wow. It was huge.

We shared the pies and cakes. The blueberry cheesecake (P60/slice) was fantastic. The apple strudel (P42) was perfect. According to the owner, they use seven apples in each pie. Now how's that for chunky?

Their almond sans rival was a big delight. The tiramisu (P49) would make Italians sigh. "Sinful" is how they described it. For the adventurous, they have the *ube* cheesecake. It was flavorful, but not too rich. Almost like the Good Shepherd Ube Jam in Baguio.

Owner Kenneth Lim's favorite, the cherry cheesecake, must be on everyone's list, too, since they ran out that night.

I wouldn't say we were disappointed with what we had, though. I think by that time, we were all mumbling incoherently. Yes, it was that good.

This time, there were six of us again, the bill reached a whopping P950. As I was exclaiming over how inexpensive food in Cebu is, Jonji explained. "Us Cebuanos are *kuripot. Kung mahal ang pagkain sa* restaurant, *hindi na kami babalik.*"

The Dessert Factory has more gustatory delights in store—all kinds of cheesecake, crème brulée, mango cake, chocolate cake, flourless chocolate cake, banana split cake, carrot cake, chocolate mousse and strawberry truffle. Their banana split is an inexpensive P80 treat. There also are smoothies and different kinds of coffee on the menu.

This restaurant isn't just for the sugar junkies. They also serve lunch and dinner. Here are a few dishes you might want to try: the grilled squid, eggplant parmigiana, roasted vegetables pasta, shepherd's pie and the cheesestick sandwich.

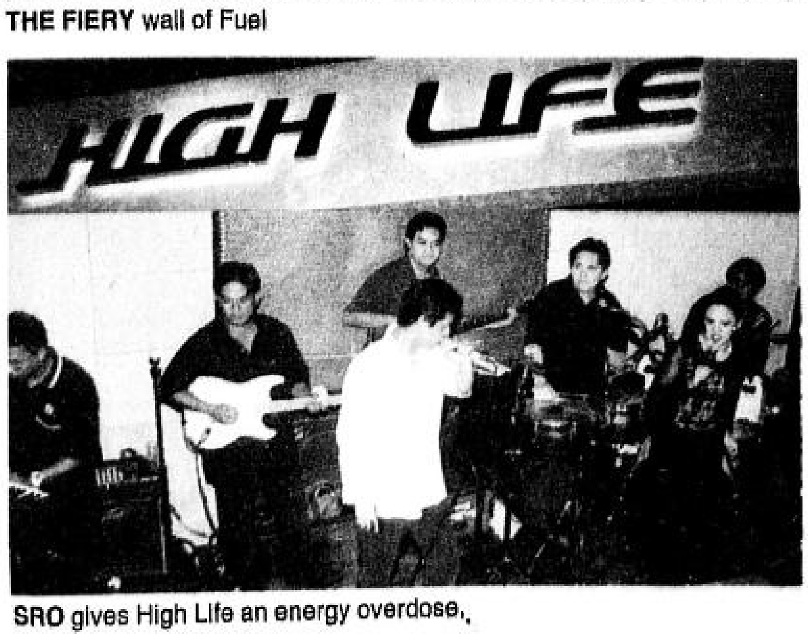
The cozy interiors of the place and the good service adds to this restaurant's appeal.

The Dessert Factory is open 11 a.m.-12 mn every day.

There you have it. Next time you're in Cebu, make sure your intestines are ready. And make sure you bring Alka Seltzer, just in case. *Pam Pastor*

E-mail the author at pammy@exchange.ph

THE FIERY wall of Fuel



SRO gives High Life an energy overdose.

Carousing in Cebu

(From page D1)

High Life
Crossroads Mall
Banilad, Cebu City

The first thing that struck me when I walked into High Life was the architecture. The two-story structure has a different kind of setup—the stage is elevated right behind the bar, the DJ's box is hanging from the second floor and there is a veranda where people can enjoy Cebu's night breeze.

Owner Neil Labrador, a bank executive who chose to invest in the nightlife, was partying, too, that night.

People filled almost every inch of the place that Friday night. SRO (Cebu's Side A) was onstage, performing '80s hits and ballads. Male lead singer Bono is also 101's DJ Johnny Loco.

The crowd was receptive and very, very enthusiastic. Everyone was singing out loud and dancing nonstop. People were greeting each other left and right—it was one big party. And despite the fact that it was my first time to be there, I felt completely at ease—and I had a blast.

The band was really good—so good that the people started groaning and screaming when they started to leave. They wanted more.

On other nights, people enjoy the loud thump-thump of techno music.

SPOTTED IN CEBU. Youth Icon and Zero Below owner Francis Magalona

Zero Below
1142 A.S. Fortuna Road
Mandaue City, Cebu

"I haven't been here in six months," Francis Magalona, part-owner of Zero Below, said. Michael Ong, his partner, was also there.

People started to stream in at 2:30 a.m. When we left at past 3, the place was still packed—and the people were still so energized. "*Hanggang mga* 6 a.m. *pa yan*," Mon Escaño said.

All around the bar that was in the center of the venue, people were dancing and drinking. On one side, people were cheering the brave souls who were downing alcohol with the beer bong.

Zero Below, according to Francis, is where Cebu's "vampires" gather. It is home to DJ War and female DJ Wang Lim.

The bar is spacious—you can dance comfortably without knocking over tables, as they are positioned on one side of the room. On the wall are constantly changing projected pictures—nude bodies, artworks, photography—eye candy.

Globe Telecom
wolfgang
CEBU'S Malate—The Village

The bar is also a venue for artistic shows. Last January, they hosted a sight and sound event, featuring a mixture of artists from Cebu. The first one featured Francis' photography and artworks.

"You know another reason people come back here?" Francis said, with a twinkle in his eye. "The buffalo wings. You want to try?"

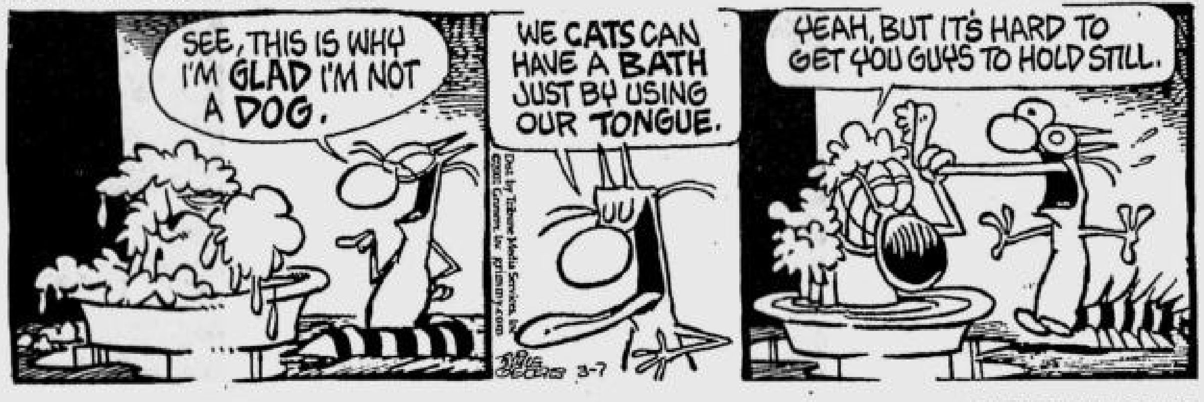
Try I did. The ZB wings were hot—really hot—and flavorful. People would come back for more. No big surprise there.

MALACAÑAN PALACE

We now interrupt
your reading with this
very important
announcement.

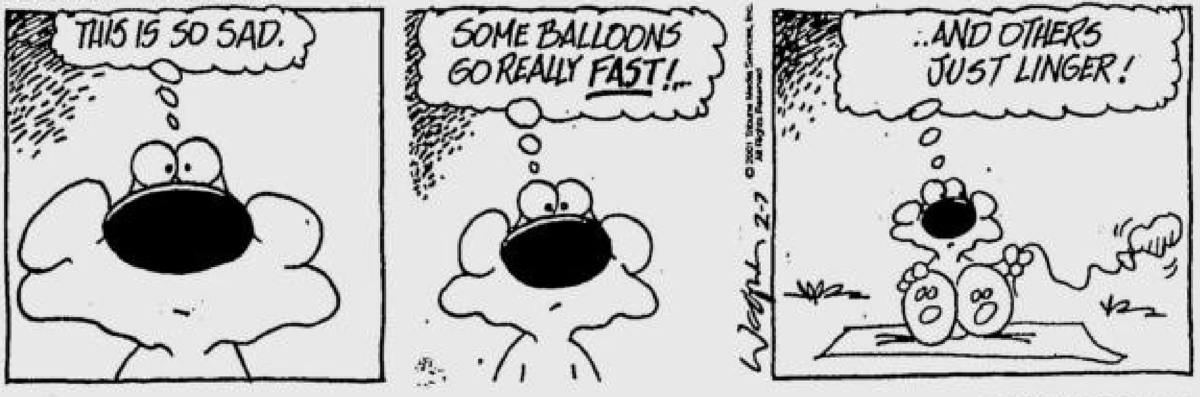
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


SEE, THIS IS WHY I'M GLAD I'M NOT A DOG.
WE CATS CAN HAVE A BATH JUST BY USING OUR TONGUE.
YEAH, BUT IT'S HARD TO GET YOU GUYS TO HOLD STILL.
3-7

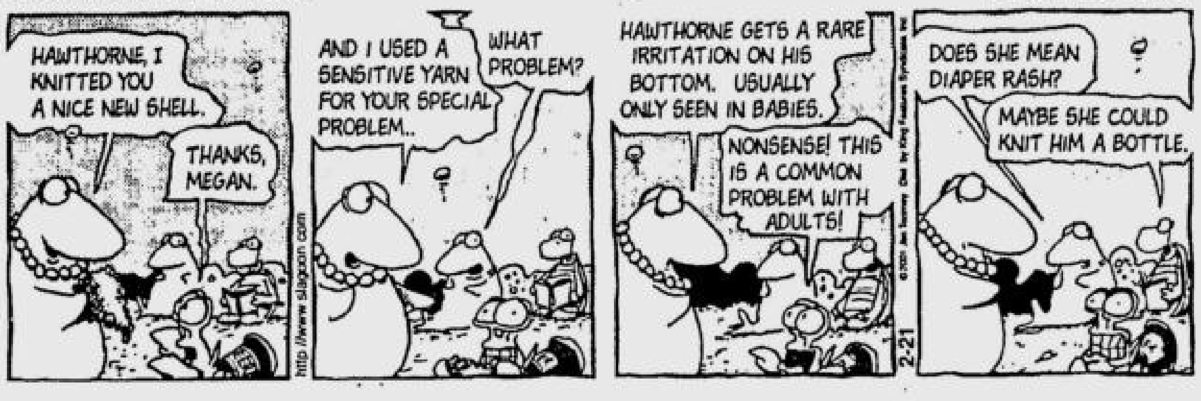
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


THIS IS SO SAD.
SOME BALLOONS GO REALLY FAST!..
..AND OTHERS JUST LINGER!
2-7

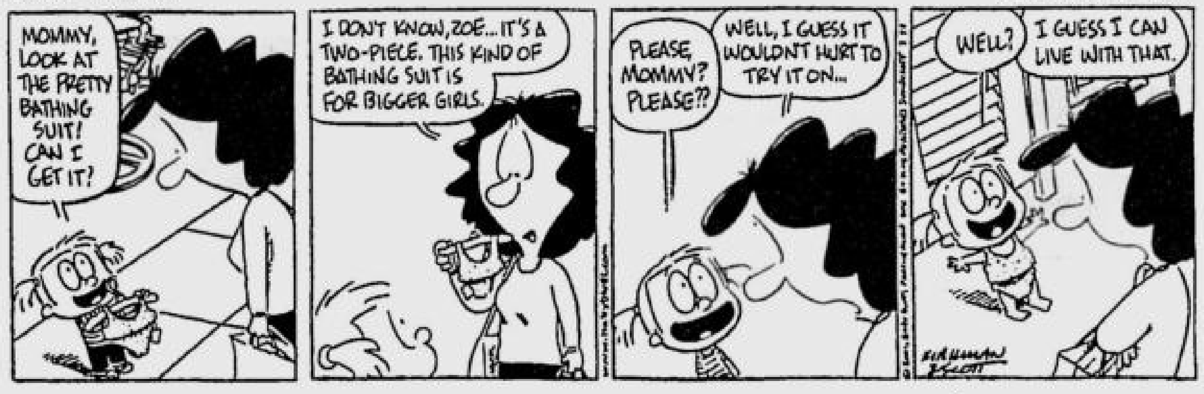
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


HAWTHORNE, I KNITTED YOU A NICE NEW SHELL.
THANKS, MEGAN.
AND I USED A SENSITIVE YARN FOR YOUR SPECIAL PROBLEM..
WHAT PROBLEM?
HAWTHORNE GETS A RARE IRRITATION ON HIS BOTTOM. USUALLY ONLY SEEN IN BABIES.
NONSENSE! THIS IS A COMMON PROBLEM WITH ADULTS!
DOES SHE MEAN DIAPER RASH?
MAYBE SHE COULD KNIT HIM A BOTTLE.
http://www.slagoon.com
2-21

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOMMY, LOOK AT THE PRETTY BATHING SUIT! CAN I GET IT?
I DON'T KNOW, ZOE... IT'S A TWO-PIECE. THIS KIND OF BATHING SUIT IS FOR BIGGER GIRLS.
PLEASE, MOMMY? PLEASE??
WELL, I GUESS IT WOULDN'T HURT TO TRY IT ON...
WELL?
I GUESS I CAN LIVE WITH THAT.
KIRKMAN SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Maya Angelou, Robert Downey Jr., Craig T. Nelson, Anthony Perkins, Yasser Arafat, David E. Kelley, Christine Lahti

Happy Birthday: You'll be powerful this year if you focus on the important projects that will bring the highest returns. Your energy and determination will be a magnet, and with the support you'll receive you should have no problem completing what you start. You will face challenges head-on, leaving absolutely nothing to chance. You will play to win, and win you shall. Your numbers: 12, 15, 17, 26, 33, 39

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your emotions will get the better of you if you've been extravagant or if you've let others take you for a ride emotionally or financially. Get rid of bad habits and bad acquaintances.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your home environment will be unstable. Don't push your luck with loved ones. If you overspend to lift your spirits, you will pay the consequences later on. Arguments are brewing.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Ask a close friend for his or her opinion regarding a personal problem you have. Relatives may cause a fuss if they feel that you haven't been fair to someone they care about.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Elders may put unwarranted demands on you. Try to calm them down and offer suggestions; however, explain that it will take a bit of time to make these changes for them.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You'll be uptight if your mate tries to curtail your freedom. Be upfront and tell him or her how you feel. If you let your anger brew, it will lead to irreconcilable differences.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You will be in an entertaining mood. Your partner may be embarrassed by your actions. Be prepared to bend if your mate is upset.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't offer to pay for others. Your good nature and desire to keep things harmonious will result in your being taken for granted. Empty promises are likely.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You will feel anxious if you believe your mate hasn't been honest with you. You need to control your temper and deal with the situation rationally if you want to salvage the relationship.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your need to learn will lead you into strange topics of conversation. Don't hesitate to come right out and ask for the pertinent information if you are questioning a concept or principle.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your bills may be strangling you right now. Talk to someone in the family who can help or at least give you some legitimate solutions to your financial worries.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't let innuendoes result in you doing or saying something that you'll regret later on. Depression will follow if you handle the situation badly. Just concentrate on your goals and don't argue.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Attractions to clients or individuals you work with will be enticing. Use your head and be careful not to endanger your professional position for the sake of a passionate affair.

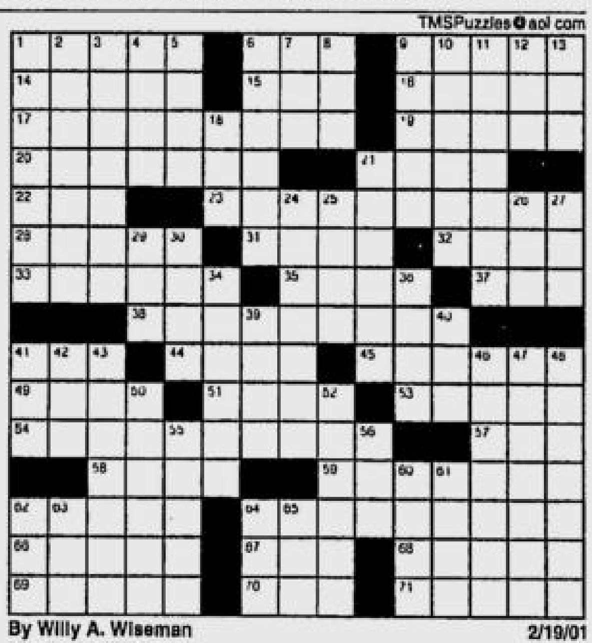
Birthday Baby: You will be quick to make a move and eager to get involved in everything that interests you. You have staying power and the ability to get others to follow your lead. You are dynamic, caring and stable.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS
1 Skewers
6 Bankroll
9 Grouchy one
14 Golfer Palmer
15 Legendary Bruin
16 With The, city in 25D
17 Presidential pattern?
19 Cake coverage
20 Grasslands
21 Narrow cut
22 Fodder
23 Presidential subsidy?
28 Agenda entries
31 Hook's mate
32 Sicilian volcano
33 Horny: pref.
35 Emphatic typeface: abbr.
37 Conclusion
38 Scarves worn by presidents?
41 High mount
44 Branch headquarters?
45 Sudden jerks
49 Fall guy
51 Authentic
53 Water vapor
54 President in need of repair?
57 Pub order
58 Extend across
59 Boat race
62 Sweeping sagas
64 Pursued president?
66 Foot the bill
67 Raw mineral
68 Bogus
69 Expenses
70 Corn unit
71 Let loose

DOWN
1 Of Aeolic verse
2 Apportion
3 Decorative designer in wood
4 Polynesian figurine
5 Char slightly
6 Courters
7 Fine work
8 Med. personnel
9 Mexican dish
10 "Briannicus" dramatist
11 Unsettle
12 Holy woman
13 Quantity of beer
18 Excavate
21 T-bone and sirloin
24 Spielberg epic
25 Holland: abbr.
26 Country hotel
27 Pop
29 Queen of the fairies
30 Musial or Laurel
34 Titania's husband
36 Pool lengths
39 Manipulator
40 Took a chair
41 Earlier
42 Bodybuilder Ferrigno
43 Dupes
46 City on Puget Sound
47 Valletta citizens
48 Vilified
50 Arnold Stang cartoon character
52 "Brigadoon" lyricist
55 Abstains from eating
56 Dampen hemp
60 Hook with a handle
61 A long ways off
62 & so forth
63 Paid athlete, briefly
64 Misery
65 Historic period



By Willy A. Wiseman
New York, NY
2/19/01

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

W	A	R	H	O	L	■	A	L	A	N	A	L	D	A
I	D	I	O	C	Y	■	S	I	B	E	L	I	U	S
N	O	B	L	E	R	■	I	T	E	M	I	Z	E	S
■	■	■	M	A	I	L	S	■	S	E	E	■	■	■
C	A	D	E	N	C	E	■	■	■	S	N	O	R	E
A	X	E	S	■	S	A	T	■	L	E	A	N	E	R
R	O	T	■	■	■	D	E	V	A	S	T	A	T	E
A	L	E	S	■	G	E	N	E	S	■	E	R	I	C
C	O	N	Q	U	E	R	O	R	■	■	■	O	C	T
A	T	T	U	N	E	■	N	O	W	■	E	L	L	E
S	L	E	E	T	■	■	■	N	E	S	T	L	E	D
■	■	■	A	W	E	■	H	A	N	C	H	■	■	■
C	O	O	L	I	D	G	E	■	T	R	I	P	L	E
U	N	P	E	N	N	E	D	■	B	E	C	A	M	E
R	E	T	R	E	A	T	S	■	Y	E	S	M	A	N

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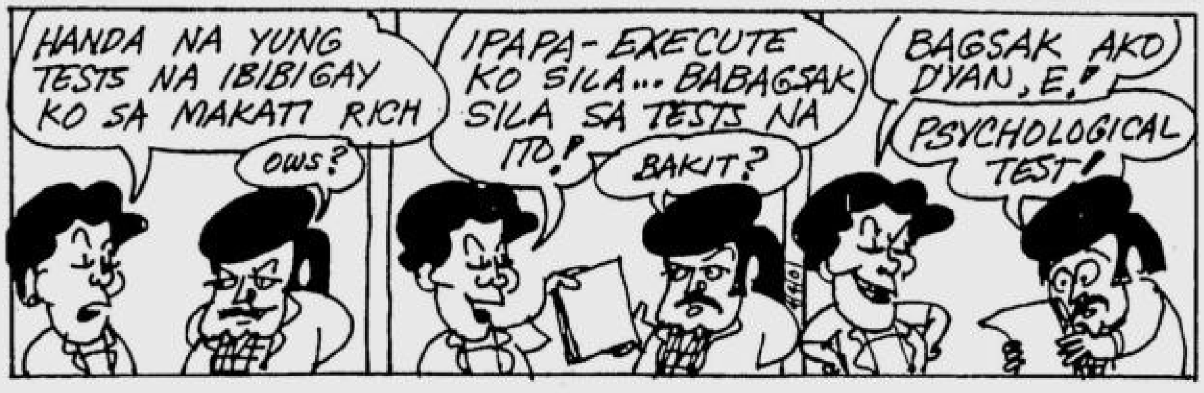
2/19/01

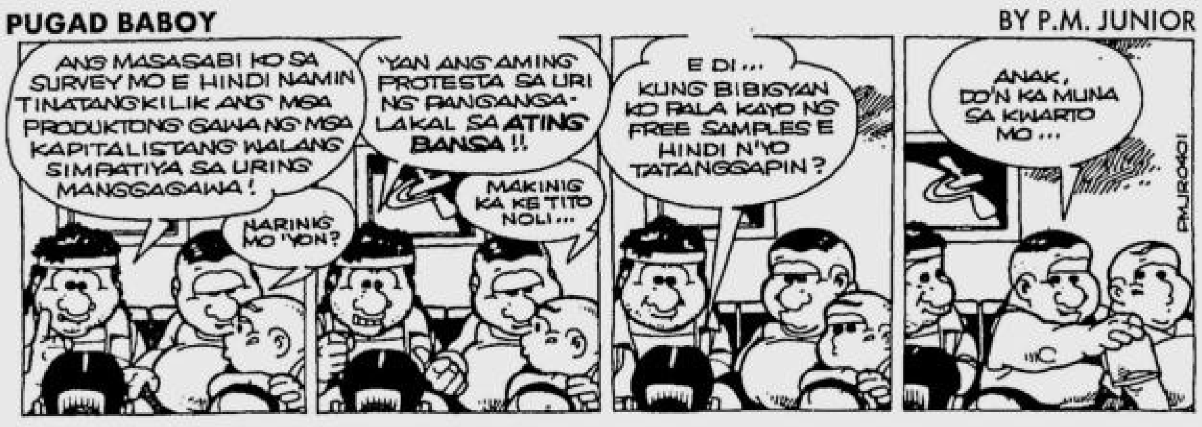
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HANDA NA YUNG TESTS NA IBIBIGAY KO SA MAKATI RICH
OWS?
IPAPA-EXECUTE KO SILA... BABAGSAK SILA SA TESTS NA ITO!
BAKIT?
BAGSAK AKO DYAN, E.!
PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST!

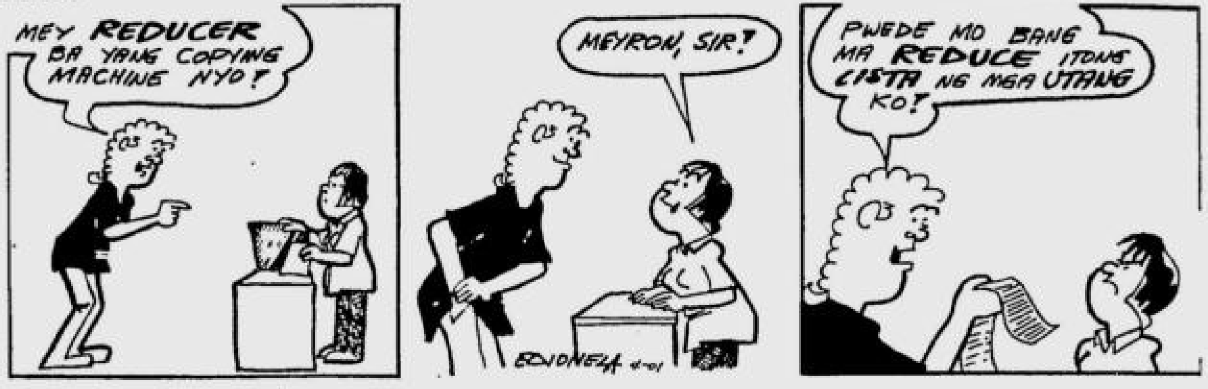
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANG MASASABI KO SA SURVEY MO E HINDI NAMIN TINATANGKILIK ANG MGA PRODUKTONG GAWA NG MGA KAPITALISTANG WALANG SIMPATIYA SA URING MANGGAGAWA!
NARINIG MO 'YON?
'YAN ANG AMING PROTESTA SA URI NG PANGANGALAKAL SA ATING BANSA!!
MAKINIG KA KE TITO NOLI...
E DI... KUNG BIBIGYAN KO PALA KAYO NG FREE SAMPLES E HINDI N'YO TATANGGAPIN?
ANAK, DO'N KA MUNA SA KWARTO MO...
PMJR0401

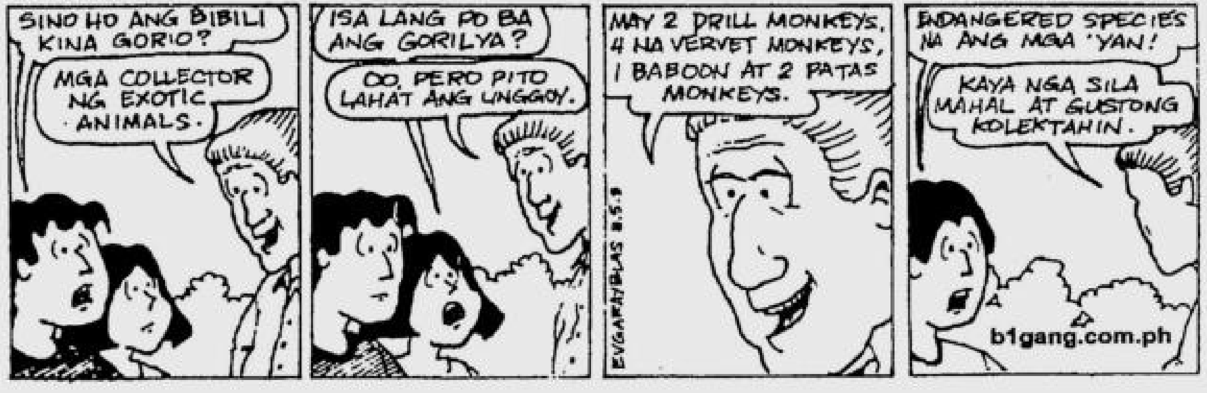
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


MEY REDUCER BA YANG COPYING MACHINE NYO?
MEYRON, SIR!
PWEDE MO BANG MA REDUCE ITONG LISTA NG MGA UTANG KO?
EDIONELA 4-01

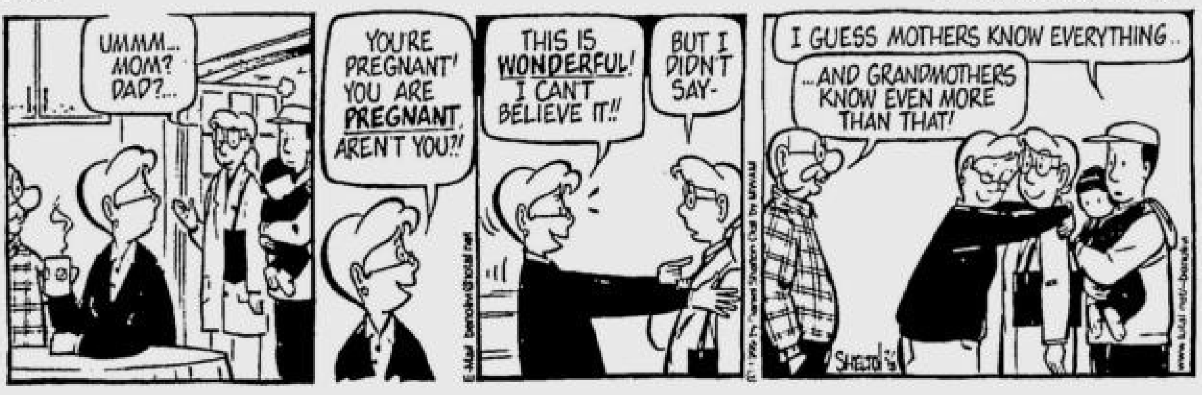
B1 GANG

BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


SINO HO ANG BIBILI KINA GORIO?
MGA COLLECTOR NG EXOTIC ANIMALS.
ISA LANG PO BA ANG GORILYA?
OO, PERO PITO LAHAT ANG UNGGOY.
MAY 2 DRILL MONKEYS, 4 NA VERVET MONKEYS, 1 BABOON AT 2 PATAS MONKEYS.
ENDANGERED SPECIES NA ANG MGA 'YAN!
KAYA NGA SILA MAHAL AT GUSTONG KOLEKTAHIN.
b1gang.com.ph

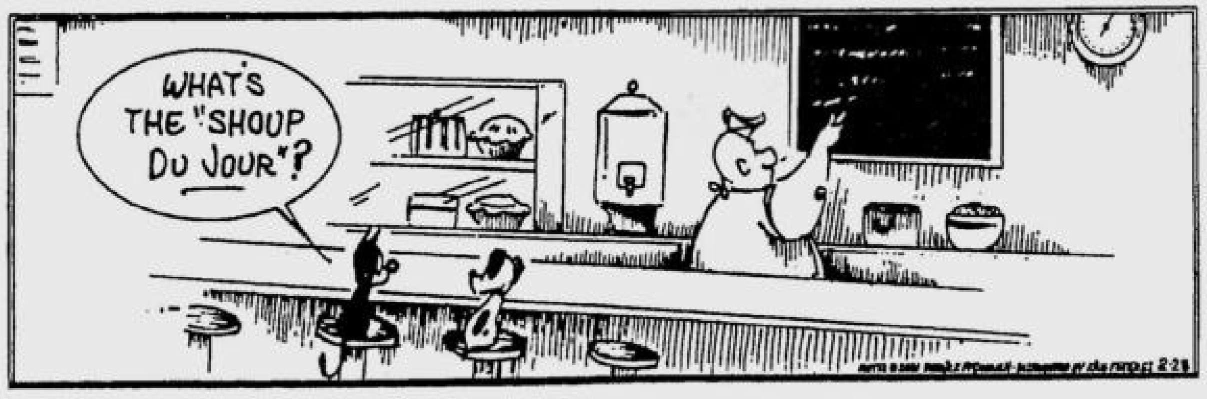
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


UMMM... MOM? DAD?...
YOU'RE PREGNANT! YOU ARE PREGNANT, AREN'T YOU?!
THIS IS WONDERFUL! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!!
BUT I DIDN'T SAY-
I GUESS MOTHERS KNOW EVERYTHING..
...AND GRANDMOTHERS KNOW EVEN MORE THAN THAT!

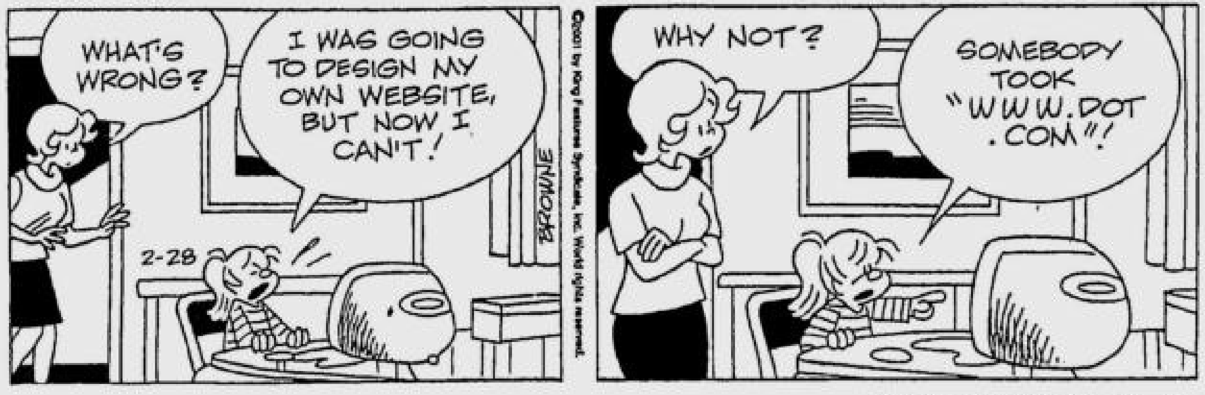
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'S THE "SHOUP DU JOUR"?
2-28

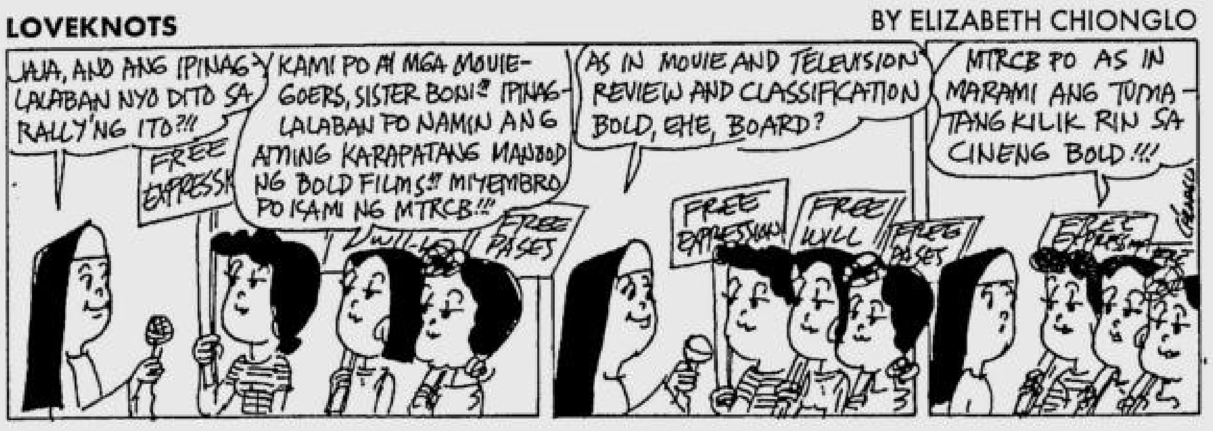
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


WHAT'S WRONG?
I WAS GOING TO DESIGN MY OWN WEBSITE, BUT NOW I CAN'T!
2-28
WHY NOT?
SOMEBODY TOOK "WWW.DOT.COM"!

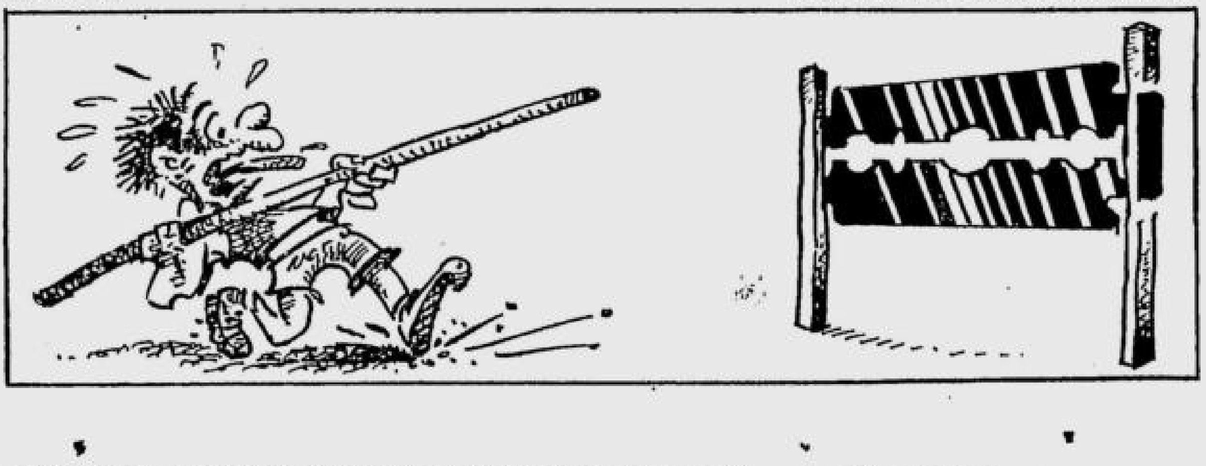
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, ANO ANG IPINAGLALABAN NYO DITO SA RALLY'NG ITO?!!
FREE EXPRESSION
KAMI PO AY MGA MOVIE-GOERS, SISTER BONI! IPINAGLALABAN PO NAMIN ANG ATING KARAPATANG MANOOD NG BOLD FILMS!! MIYEMBRO PO KAMI NG MTRCB!!
FREE WILL
FREE PASES
AS IN MOVIE AND TELEVISION REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION BOLD, EHE, BOARD?
MTRCB PO AS IN MARAMI ANG TUMATANGKILIK RIN SA CINENG BOLD!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING



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President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

TxtGMA

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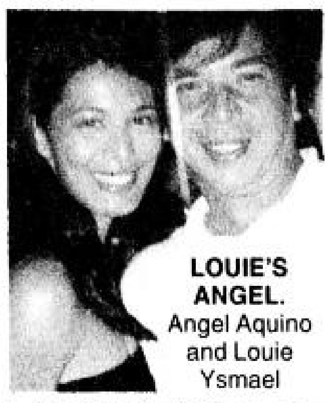
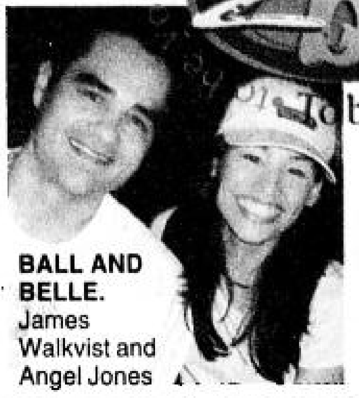
WELCOME to the Derek Ramsey laundry service. Any takers?

SUMMER LOVIN. Gerry Poblete and Cher Calvin

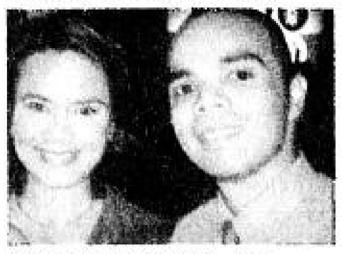
PERFECT PAIR. Daphne Oseña and Patrick Paez


LOUIE'S ANGEL. Angel Aquino and Louie Ysmael

GABBY Roa shines.


BALL AND BELLE. James Walkvist and Angel Jones

SEVENTEEN GOING ON 18. Mag editor Maya Calica and Audrey Tan at the coffe shop


PARTY CENTRAL. Alex Alikpala and Vince Rodriguez

BALLOON babe Karen Romualdez and Joyce Jimenez

BLONDE AND BLOKE. Rachel Barton and FHM's Jaycee Dee

VINCE Hizon won't let you down.

VENEZIA vixens Karen Borja and GP Reyes

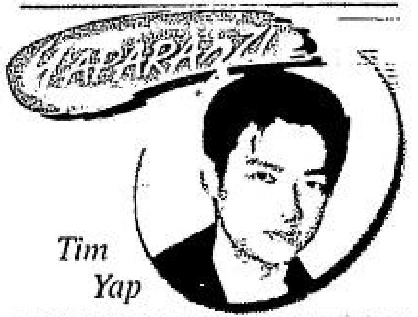
Coffee cornucopia and a bubble bath

WANT some wet ones? Sharmaine Arnaiz and Iilac Diaz get sudsy.

"WHERE'S my rubber duckie?" asks Jill Tan.

BIRTHDAY boy up for a bubble bath. Robin da Roza sambos his way up.

FEMALE NETWORK. Cosmo's Marie Santos and Patty Ongpin


Tim Yap

"Everybody is becoming this uniform, whether it's a Gucci uniform, a Prada uniform or a Celine uniform. It's like this fascist fashionista."—*artist* ***Tara Subkoff***

WITH BARELY a week to go before Holy Week, the pre-Lenten party rush possesses Manila young society's consciousness, barraging the scene with club shindigs, café launches, catwalk cavalcades and concept events left and right—indeed it just gets hotter and hotter.

This week, the scene's parties veer away from the run-of-the-mill birthday bashes, DJ events and store openings. Nothing Nazi about it, just plain unadulterated fun that spells "fresh!"

Bond and babes

FIRST on the hit list was last Thursday's launch of Venezia's "Happy Hour" party series—with "F!" (that fab ABS-CBN lifestyle show) celebrating their anniversary that day. Show hosts **Daphne Oseña, Angel Aquino** and **Cher Calvin** were in high party spirits as they table-hopped to be with their guests, an A-list parade of Bonds and babes from the media, business and fashion circles.

Cosmo's **Marie Santos** (up, up and away to New York) was also in her element that night. This darling's *despedida* brought together friends from Preview, FHM, Seventeen and other publications from the Summit group. The Get-Asia.commers (the former Local Vibe troupe) were also complete—the night served as their pre-kickoff (held the following day at Republic) for their site's sassy new "net worth."

The evening was a gathering of Manila's nocturnal who's who—partyphiles from 78 Orange, (the former) Mars, Stars and Malate habitues were fully present. While guests sipped their Chivases and Absoluts and downed their Foster's, a Porsche parade (a total of 15) took place outside the Globe Telecom-sponsored affair.

I made a French exit at 4 a.m., with the venue still wall to wall with hipsters in random revelry. Indeed, it was time to "Get Happy!"—if we were to follow the event's savvy slogan.

Sleepless in Seattle

IT was a chill weekend the following day, Friday for coffee crazy creatures at the Rockwell strip. Seattle's Best Coffee invited café society to yield to the temptation of their caffeine concoctions—the city's current craving.

From their enticing espressos, to the mocha-mazing white chocolate and raspberry kisses, cold coffee lovers' fave Café Frio, health buff's energizing Jet Teas and the immensely popular Javanilla Shake (my personal favorite—warning, it's addicting!), Seattle's Best Coffee provides the perfect brew.

The band Acoustic Jive provided the guests with chill tunes while sipping coffeehouse blends. The program started when hostess **Shaan Bermudez** introduced via video the "bean beginnings" of Seattle's Best, from its founder **Jim Stewart** to its Philippine partners, **Bernardine** and **Frederick Siy** of Coffee Masters Inc.

Indeed, drinking coffee has become such a "social experience." "Filipinos are now more discriminating about their coffee," says Frederick. "We aim to exceed coffee expectations."

"Our strength is indeed in the brew and our people," said Bernardine.

Controversial musical group The CompanY followed with a set of Joey@92.3 tunes, all of which blended with the atmosphere of good people and great coffee. Later that night, the *baristas* were having such a great time that they were already dancing (perky, perky) while serving drinks. "They're high on coffee," observed my friend as she sipped her cappuccino.

Now excuse me as I grab my Javanilla Shake.

A soap-sudded affair

FROM shakes, I jumped into foam (literally)—not the bed foam, mind you. More like detergent foam—think of going inside a giant washing machine and staying there for hours on end gyrating to DJ dance tunes.

Last weekend at the Laureano parking lot on Pasong Tamo, bars Sambo's, H&H and K8 hosted "Foam Party!"

On my way to the venue, I spotted some scenesters around the area. Most of them were wet, some were half-naked. Some guys used towels to cover their girl friends while changing, while the uninhibited ones stripped to their bare essentials, right then and there.

A giant setup complete with stage, DJ's booth and foam machines dominated the lot, with ledges surrounding pools of foam. Every 20 minutes or so, a white-washed shower would envelope the partyphiles with soap suds—a voyeuristic communal bath ensued—"live show" to say the least.

It was also Sambo's **Robin da Roza**'s natal day celebration that night. **Chris Petersen** and **Jim de la Fuente** of H&H were doing a bar showdown, with their cocktail concoctions from chilly chocolate to scintillating strawberry cheesecake martinis. They sure know how to quench a partyphile's thirsty spirits. No wonder their bar got the hipster's seal of approval this early.

This week's wonders

HAD enough? This week proves no different from the last, what with more events lined up to beat the Lenten deadline.

Fashion week at Glorietta sizzles with the unveiling of the Replay Spring Summer 2001 collection at 7 tonight at the Glorietta 4 park. Thursday, be prepared to don your cowboy attire for Cork Wine Cellar and Grill @ the Rockwell's Summer Jazz Festival—a food and music shebang sure to light up your senses.

Friday night has DJ **Manolet Dario** taking the reign in his six-hour set at 78 Orange. Friday nights are actually the best nights to go to Orange. With the crowd not as jam-packed and the club not as smoky (lungs, be warned!) as Saturdays, the vibe is just right.

Then Saturday, the Laureano compound once again hosts a summer showdown of Quiksilver and Roxy surf wear and lifestyle fashion, which will coincide with the inauguration of their Rockwell Power Plant flagship store.

Expect a burst of buffed bodies and sexy swimwear—summer is here, so bring out the suntan lotion, shades and margaritas on the beach!

It's time to take the uniform off.

WATER FUN. Taking a bath is more exciting in threes.

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

SEATTLE'S bell(e) Shaan Bermudez

THE BALD AND THE BEAUTIFUL. Kit De Guzman and LJ Gordon in his latest buzz

READY for a dip—or a dive?

SEATTLE'S BEST. Cutie del Mar becomes one of the boys, with Troy Montero, Patrick Garcia and Miko Palanca.

COFFEE TRIO. Mark Reyes, Mae Young and Elian Habayeb

SEATTLE'S best banker Renee Yap

GLOBAL TANDEM. Camille Cruz and Luigi Reyes at "Happy Hour"

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FASHION preview from Pauline Suaco

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Yo! Mario

BY MOZART A.T. PASTRANO

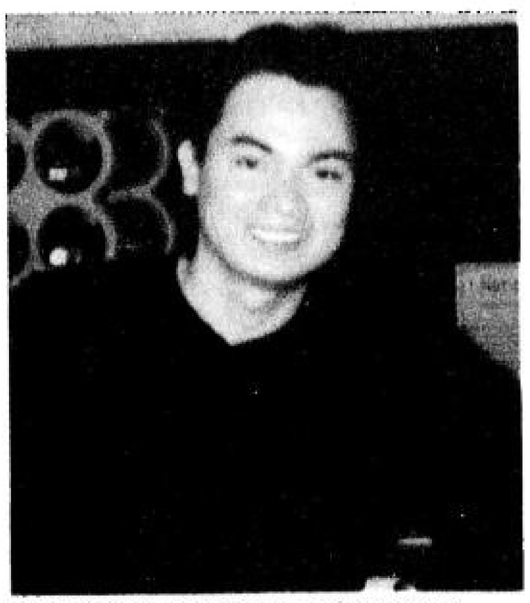
THEY still talk about it, how Holy Week was turned upside down last year at Bantayan Island, an otherwise tranquil hideaway off the northern tip of Cebu. Athletes trooped there for a well-publicized triathlon. Kibitzers stormed the place to gawk at the Mutya ng Pilipinas-Cebu contestants during the equally well-publicized bikini pageant at night. And everyone danced the Lenten blues away to the cajoling of Puro Ritmo, a Latin samba a cappella group. Holy Week, indeed!

The culprit is none other than a "*malambing guappie*" ("*guapo na* yuppie") right in the thick of Cebu's social circuit—Mario Colmenares, designer, disco owner, events organizer and much-loved lover of wild, wild stuff.

And you won't even suspect it when you see him. He's so cuddly and gentle and everything nice. But don't let those dopey eyes and dangling mane dupe you. This is one hot dude.

So hot he transformed a street in the middle of high-society Cebu into a white-sand beach for a beach party at his happening place, Fuel. That was before Fuel transferred to its sizzling new location at The Village (*See related story on Cebu's nightlife on page D1*).

Cebu's nightlife has gone from swell to swinging, partly because of Mario Colmenares



SLEEPLESS IN CEBU. Cool Colmenares

PHOTO: JOHANN LONGAKIT JR.

Now, before eco-activists fly to Cebu for a rally, here's a crucial fact: Mario used fake sand. "Like a famous resort in Mactan," the perpetrator squealed to us in a naughty whisper. Fake sand or not, he had sexy, bikini-clad women and sexy, trunks-garbed men strut their stuff up and down the stretch of "sand" to welcome partygoers, which turned out to be legion.

National team swimmer

If the beach and the sea seem a recurrent theme, that's probably because Mario began his public life as a swimmer. He began to swim at 11 years old, when he was still in grade school at the Don Bosco in Labangon, Cebu. Two years and two schools later, he made it to the Philippine team, where he competed in the Southeast Asian Games in Singapore.

"The one thing I learned as an athlete is the importance of discipline," Mario says now, across a dainty table at Yo! Latino, a trendy bar he co-owns with his longtime partner, James Gaite, a renowned plastic surgeon.

"Discipline," Mario reiterates. "And focus."

Which was what he most needed at the time, since he was grappling with his own private hell: a broken family. He focused his energies on the sport, practicing sometimes at the family resorts in Talisay, Cebu and at Guimaras Island.

Lured by the sea to sail off and see the world, Mario finished an HRM course at the University of San Jose Recoletos in Cebu and went off to see the world. "My favorite place in the world is Bangkok. I love the food, the culture, the nightlife."

His favorite place in the Philippines? "Boracay!" he blurts out without batting an eyelash.

Needless to say, his favorite sports today are aquatic sports like windsurfing, which he does in Mactan. He also surfs—the Internet.

Main business

His main business today is Ensepia, a garments company that produces ready-to-wear and, just recently, made-to-order designer clothes. Ten years ago, he began to organize events, under the Ensepia business name, too. "Parties, discos, college-type fun, you know," he smiles in that disarming, mesmerizing way.

In 1988, he opened Fuel, the coolest place in Cebu ever—claim his fans, like Leo Sanchez, director for corporate marketing of Globe Telecom, who has successfully linked up with Mario as a GenTxt partner. (This means that GenTxt cardholders get discounts and other treats at Fuel, Yo! Latino and Soap, a chill-out bar next door.)

"He's Cebu's best partymaker," Leo avers.

When asked what his greatest achievement is, Mario is quick to say, "Being able to stand on my own two feet at 21 years old. I haven't asked money from my parents since then."

Now, that's one hot dude who's also super cool.

E-mail the author at mozpas@yahoo.com

RCBC awards young storytellers

ONE is never too young to know and understand the grave threat to the environment.

That is evidenced by Ritchel A. Modal, 9, Jenny Pearl L. Fadul, 12, and Patricia Mae C. Cielo, 13, winners in this year's RCBC 7th Kuwentong Kalikasan Katha ng Kabataan.

Whether from folk tales handed down from generation to generation or from vivid images of death and destruction on television or the magical, mystical creations of a popular author, all three winners of the annual competition sponsored by the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. seem to have clearly heard the message and learned the lesson well—that the environment is at risk and something has to be done about it.

The winning stories will be staged by Peta during the awards ceremonies at 5:30 p.m. today at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, podium 4/L RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City.

Each of the three winners walks away with P30,000 in cash plus a scholarship package worth P25,000 from Pacific Plans Inc. while the school gets P20,000 each, and the momeroom advisers, P5,000 each.

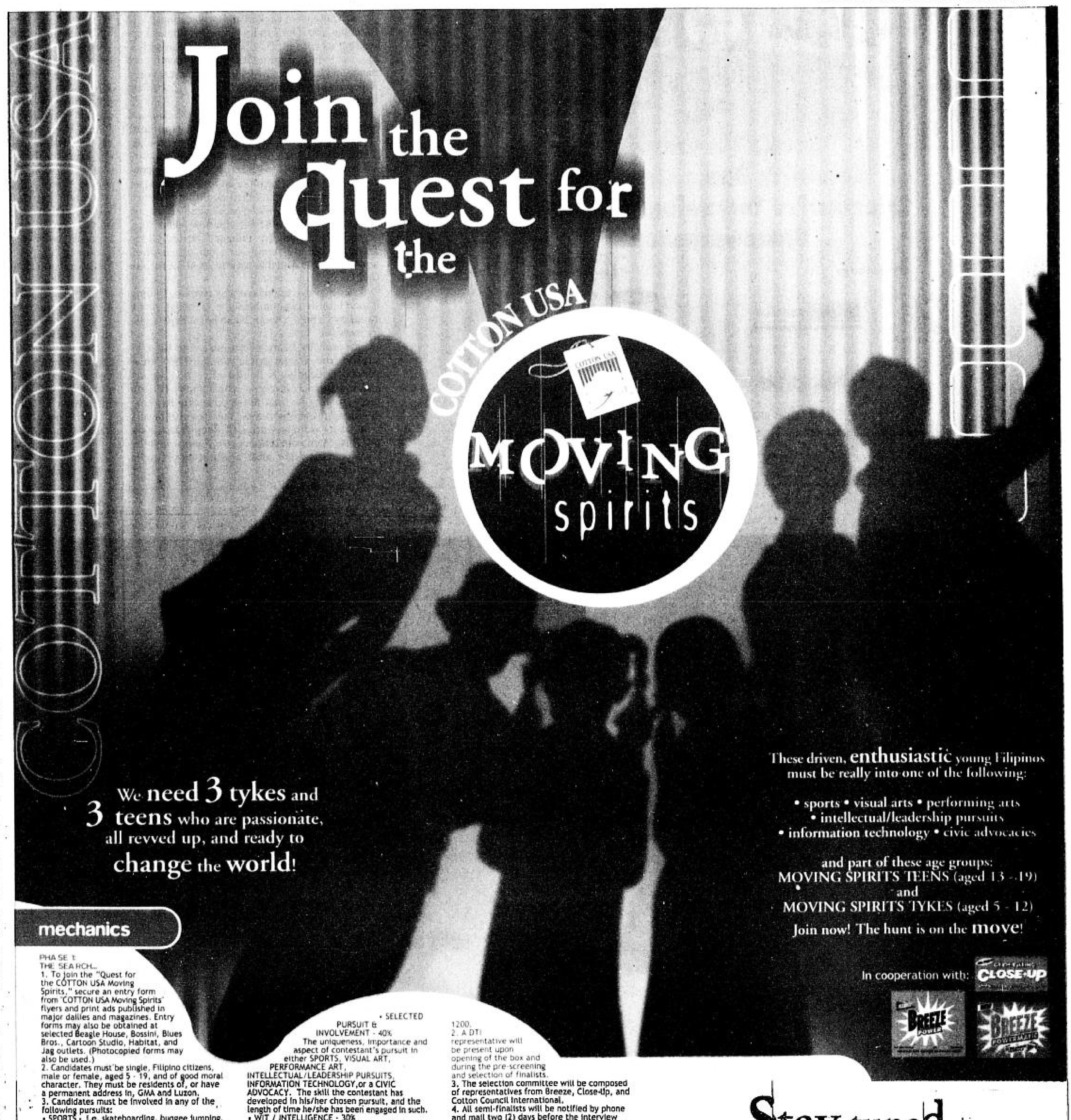
The winners are planning to go beyond writing award-winning stories. They are hoping to help spread the word, within their own families, their peers and their families, that the environment is such a fragile that has to be cared for, nurtured, protected and preserved. This message is at the root of the annual competition, which was the brainchild of Yvonne S. Yuchengco, now president and CEO of Malayan Insurance Group, member of the Yuchengco Group.

Modal, a Subanon studying at Palinta Elementary School in Palinta, Kabasalan, Zamboanga del Sur, retells in her story a legend of how a stream was created in her community.

Fadul, a student at Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy in Mati, Davao Oriental, got the idea for her story from the disturbing images of destruction to life and property caused by the unwise exploitation of natural resources.

Writer Madeleine L'Engle's works gave Cielo, a student at the Colegio de San Agustin in Makati City, the idea for her futuristic, science-fiction type of essay in English.

All three girls are convinced that youth is no reason they could not take more concrete action to help protect and preserve the environment. They said their research for their winning stories only heightened their awareness of the very real threat to the environment and the need to act now.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We need 3 tykes and 3 teens who are passionate, all revved up, and ready to change the world!
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• sports • visual arts • performing arts • intellectual/leadership pursuits • information technology • civic advocacies
and part of these age groups: MOVING SPIRITS TEENS (aged 13 - 19) and MOVING SPIRITS TYKES (aged 5 - 12)
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PHASE 1:
THE SEARCH...

1. To join the "Quest for the COTTON USA Moving Spirits," secure an entry form from 'COTTON USA Moving Spirits' flyers and print ads published in major dailies and magazines. Entry forms may also be obtained at selected Beagle House, Bossini, Blues Bros., Cartoon Studio, Habitat, and Jag outlets. (Photocopied forms may also be used.)
2. Candidates must be single, Filipino citizens, male or female, aged 5 - 19, and of good moral character. They must be residents of, or have a permanent address in, GMA and Luzon.
3. Candidates must be involved in any of the following pursuits:
   - SPORTS - i.e. skateboarding, bungee jumping, gymnastics, in-line or ice skating, martial arts, mountain or rock climbing, etc.
   - VISUAL ART - i.e. graphic art, painting, sculpture, animation, fashion or interior design, body art, etc.
   - PERFORMANCE ART - i.e. dance, music, drama, mime
   - INTELLECTUAL/LEADERSHIP PURSUITS - i.e. entrepreneurs, club or org leaders, debaters, writers, etc.
   - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - i.e. computer techies, internet buffs, PC gamers, etc.
   - CIVIC ADVOCACIES - i.e. charity, ecology, religious, anti-drugs, etc. advocates
4. Fill in entry form and attach the following: a) a brief resume of the candidate describing him/herself and his/her pursuit/s from the above list; b) one (1) 3R close-up colored photograph; and c) photocopy of birth certificate.
5. Enclose in a long white envelope, and mail it to the "Quest for the COTTON USA Moving Spirits" at Strategic Edge, Inc., 501 Greenbelt Mansion, 106 Perea Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City 1200; or drop in drop boxes located at the same address.
6. There will be two categories: MOVING SPIRITS TYKES, for kids aged 5 - 12; and MOVING SPIRITS TEENS for those aged 13 - 19.
7. All entries must be in by April 15, 2001, 6 PM.
8. A panel of judges will pre-screen submitted entries and choose twelve (12) semi-finalists each for the TEENS and the TYKES category on April 16, 2001, 10 am at Strategic Edge, Inc., 501 Greenbelt Mansion, 106 Perea Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City 1200. The twenty-four (24) semi-finalists will be notified through phone and registered mail to come to the Strategic Edge, Inc., office on April 19, 2001 at 10 AM for a personal interview by the judges.
9. Criteria for judging is as follows:
   - SELECTED PURSUIT & INVOLVEMENT - 40%
   The uniqueness, importance and aspect of contestant's pursuit in either SPORTS, VISUAL ART, PERFORMANCE ART, INTELLECTUAL/LEADERSHIP PURSUITS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, or a CIVIC ADVOCACY. The skill the contestant has developed in his/her chosen pursuit, and the length of time he/she has been engaged in such.
   - WIT / INTELLIGENCE - 30%
   How well the contestant fares in the question-and-answer portion before the panel of judges. How well he/she can express him/herself, how well he/she thinks on his/her feet. His/her knowledge of things beyond his/her selected pursuit.
   - PERSONALITY & CHARM - 30%
   How pleasant, humorous and likeable the contestant is. How friendly, open and interesting he/she is.
10. Prizes will be awarded after the judging.
11. The judges will choose the twelve (12) finalists, six (6) for the TEENS category and six (6) for the TYKES category. The finalists will each receive the following prizes:

TEENS (6):
- Clothes from COTTON USA licensees
- P5,000. Gift Certificate from Tower Records
- Sony Discman
- P 15,000 cash
- Unilever Gift Pack worth P2,500.

TYKES (6):
- Clothes from COTTON USA licensees
- P5,000. Gift Certificate from Toy Kingdom
- Casio M-120 49-key Musical Organ
- P 15,000 cash
- Unilever Gift Pack worth P 2,500.

12. 20% tax for prizes in excess of P10,000, will be shouldered by Unilever Philippines.
13. Employees of Cotton Council International, COTTON USA licensees, Unilever Philippines and their advertising and PR agencies, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from becoming candidates in the quest.

Control Measures:
1. All entries received shall be dropped in a sealed drop box in the custody of Ms. Neri Balais of Strategic Edge, Inc., 501 Greenbelt Mansion, 106 Perea Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City 1200.
2. A DTI representative will be present upon opening of the box and during the pre-screening and selection of finalists.
3. The selection committee will be composed of representatives from Breeze, Close-Up, and Cotton Council International.
4. All semi-finalists will be notified by phone and mail two (2) days before the interview schedule. Absence during the panel interview automatically disqualifies the candidate.

See posters and flyers for the rules of the hunt.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0355. Series of 2001.

That's the spirit.

Stay tuned for phase 2...

The vote for the 6 MOVING SPIRITS and the grand raffle!

If you're ready to change the world, fill this in and send it to the address below.

Yes! I'd like to join the Quest for the COTTON USA Moving Spirits.
Name: ____________________
Address: ____________________
Telephone Nos.: (landline) ____________________
(cellphone) ____________________
Birthday: ____________________ Age: ________
School: ____________________
e-mail address: ____________________
Signature: ____________________

I am very passionate about:
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- ☐ visual arts
- ☐ performing arts
- ☐ intellectual/leadership pursuits
- ☐ information technology
- ☐ civic advocacies

Please enclose a 3R close-up colored photo of yourself, and a brief resume describing your pursuit (one or more of the six listed above), and how it makes you feel; and a photocopy of your birth certificate.

The Quest for the COTTON USA Moving Spirits
Strategic Edge, Inc., 501 Greenbelt Mansion, 106 Perea Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City 1200.

PDI

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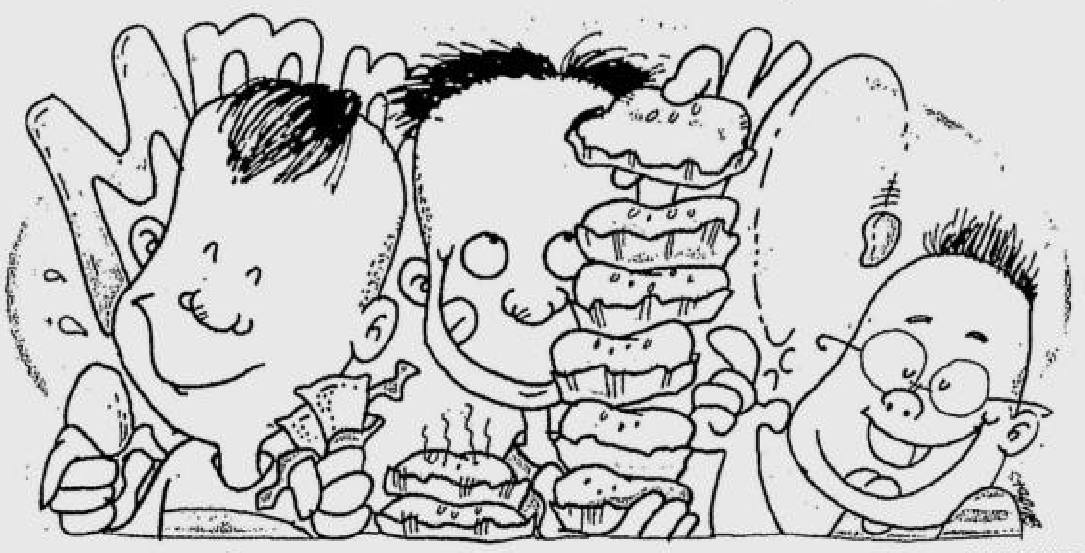
to be young • to be you • to be young • To be you! 2bU

For those off to the Queen City of the South this 'bakasyon,' here's a taste-test of the dozen-and-one 'pasalubongs'



STEPH BRAVO

A merry mouthful of Cebu

I FIRST tasted Cebu during the sultry summers of my childhood, when my parents would hoist us up the gangplank, my two brothers and I, so we could take a break from our beloved Mindanao and go see our cousins in the Queen City of the South.

Ah, those were wicked, messy vacations. And fattening, too. Our sundry aunts and uncles kept feeding us no end. How I remember those luscious golden-ripe **mangoes** ripped with our bare hands and fangy teeth—which were best savored with *puto maya*, a mountain of sticky rice cooked to perfection in coconut oil.

There, too, were the ***suman nga dawa*** and ***bibingka nga dawa***, even ***bibingka* Mandaue**, all merrily munched in our mind even to this day.

But my hands-down favorite was—and still *is*—the ***masareal***. It is a creamy, crumbly concoction of crushed peanuts and milk and sugar. A lethal combination which could be had then at only P5 per bar. When we visited Cebu last weekend to attend the information technology summit sponsored by industry leader Globe Telecom Inc., we found out a bar of *masareal* now costs P20! And that's the price at the *tabuan* (market)!

I never was a fan of crunchy ***ampao***, finding it too childish and cumbersome, although many swear by Cebu's *ampao*. It can be an experience by itself.

For crunchy treats, I turn instead to the ***chicharon*** from Carcar or Guadalupe. The Carcar version is deadly: A hybrid of *lechon kawali* and the Ilokano *bagnet*—with chunks of lean meat clinging joyfully to the pork skin bursting in golden-brown crispness. You can also have a feast of its sidings—strips of **deep-fried pork fat**. Best eaten with leftover rice, *kamayan*-style, with your *barkada* after a whole afternoon's beer binge.

This being Lent, you'll probably want your *pasalubong* to be pork-free. There's the usual ***galletas*** and ***salbaro***; Shamrock ***otap***; Titay's ***rosquillos***; and Lola Pureza's **peanut broas** (highly recommended; available at the chi-chi Chedz bakeshop at Ayala Center).

Cebu is also known for its **squid flakes**, which are to die for. Check out the Royal brand. This shameless mix of squid, sugar, salt, honey, chili and corn oil is definitely a must-munch.

Nothing beats going to the market to buy kilos of dried fish, or ***bulad*** (silent "l" so you pronounce it *boo-wad*). The famous Tabuan is a foodie's paradise: Take your pick of all sorts of *bulad*, from boneless *danggit* to fish *tocino* to skeleton fish to gigantic chunks of deep-sea fish. At scandalously low prices, to boot!

Of course, if you have the wherewithal, and if you cannot care less about Lent (like that wondrous woman in "Chocolat"), you cannot afford not to take home a bamboo skewer or two of Cebuano ***lechon***. Early this year, we saw INQUIRER columnist Mon Tulfo at the Manila Centennial Airport baggage carousel waiting for his *lechon* upon his arrival from a Mactan flight. Not just one *lechon* or two but, well, we stopped counting! The *lechon* from Cebu is *that* good! *Kahit isumbong mo kay* Tulfo...

Which brings me back to... mangoes. Nowadays, when people think of Cebu's mango delights, they think **dried mangoes**. The most popular brand is RM. But someone in the know says there's another brand worth tasting, but it's a for-export-only brand. We'll tell you about it once we've tasted it.

In the meantime, go ahead. Have a mouthwatering munchful of Cebu!

Mozart A.T. Pastrano

E-mail the author at mozpas@yahoo.com

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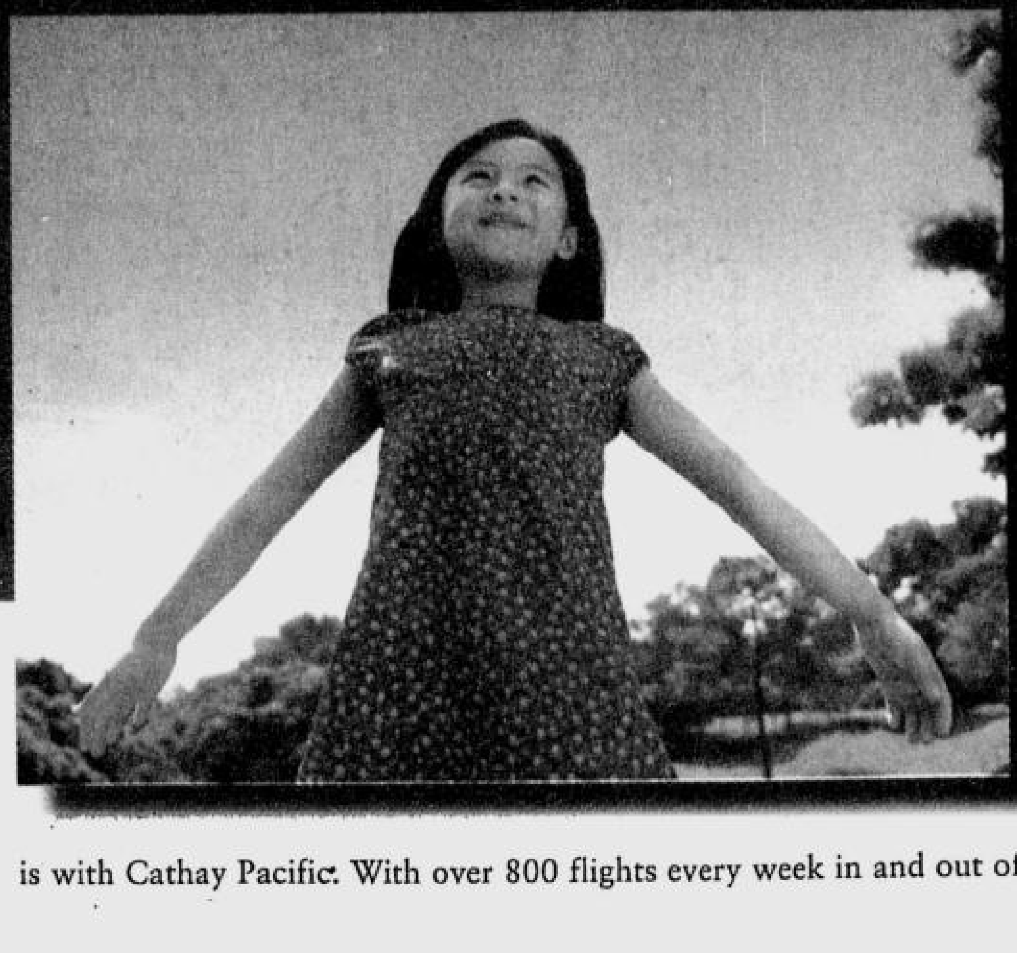

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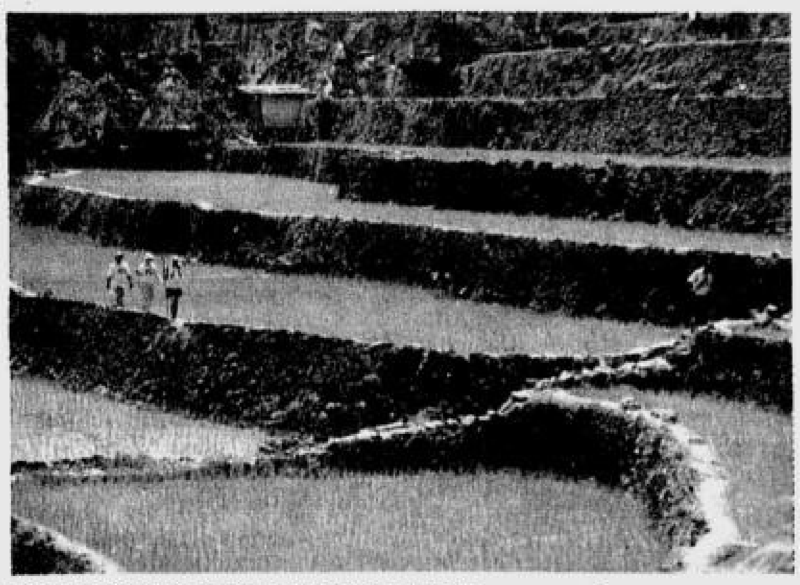
THE BATAD RICE TERRACES. Basking in nature's glory

2bU! goes to Banaue

BY HAROLD JASON L. DOPLITO
2bU! correspondent

IT'S a breathtaking place representative of our country, for it can never be found anywhere else. When stretched from end to end, this cultural landscape is estimated to go halfway around the world, or 10 times the length of The Great Wall of China. Perhaps, every Filipino utters its name whenever asked for a tourist destination to visit. But then, not everyone gets the chance to go there. It may be the distance or the lack of knowledge of the place, but certainly, those shouldn't keep anyone from trying out the adventure and exploring this magnificent architectural wonder. Such is the magic of the 2,000-year-old Ifugao Rice Terraces of Banaue.

We in 2bU! understand that the young at heart should never ever be kept in one place. We also understand that for teenagers, there is the need to travel and conquer new sights and places. And the Rice Terraces are just perfect for you. Never mind if Ifugao is a 10-hour drive from Manila. It does add a sense of adventure to the trip. Slowly but surely, one sees how the chaos of city life fades into the tranquility and beauty of the provinces. Buildings are replaced by *nipa* huts, and later by rice fields. The road sandwiched between the mountains of Cagayan Valley offers majestic scenery one often sees in landscape paintings. To

2BU/ p.E2

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Travel Notebook
by Maurice Arcache

My enduring affair with Asia

The gorgeous temples in exotic Thailand.

I'm unsealing my lips just this once, *palanggas*, about a little secret of mine. I'm in love with Asia and I've had a deep, enduring affair with this continent for the longest time.

What's not to love? Asia is the world's heart and soul - a radiant melting pot of cultural pageantry, historical grandeur, natural wonderment and cosmopolitan sophistication.

China, Korea, and Japan sparkle with the grand antiquity of their glorious pasts. In Seoul, Haikou-Hainan Island and Xiamen, majestic natural peaks provide a perfect backdrop to imposing temples and other mythical vestiges from yore that send visitors of all ages into a deep, sensational trance.

In the southeast, Thailand and Malaysia beguile the senses with the magnificent colors, pomp and opulence of their royal traditions and the arts. If you want a summer vacation that's fit for a king, make your way down to the island of Phuket in Thailand or Langkawi in Malaysia.

Naturellement, of course, no love affair is ever complete without the good things in contemporary urban living - nightlife and shopping. Singapore and Hong Kong have the hippest, most happening party places and the best bargain-hunters' sites in these parts of the globe.

Now, I'm not rattling off all these just to get you green with envy. I want you, my *palanggas*, to start your own love affair with Asia, and you can begin *pronto* this summer with Citibank. Avail of any of the heart-pounding travel packages Citibank has designed together with 13 travel agencies, 4 airlines and 1 cruise liner. Only the best travel deal plus an entire treasure chest of freebies, only for lucky souls like *moi* who have Citibank credit cards.

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As a bonus, Citibank Gold cardholders are given access to the Northwest Lounge in 22 airport locations around the world and double rewards points for overseas transactions. Now, *dahlings*, that's what I call real cool.

When traveling with Citibank credit cards, enjoy global acceptance in millions of establishments plus access to cash advances in 700,000 ATMs. With apologies to great 'Ol Blue Eyes, *moi* love affair with Asia is truly a wondrous thing, *dahlings*. And I would like nothing more than for you to start having one of your own soon - with Citibank, but of course! See you, *palanggas*.

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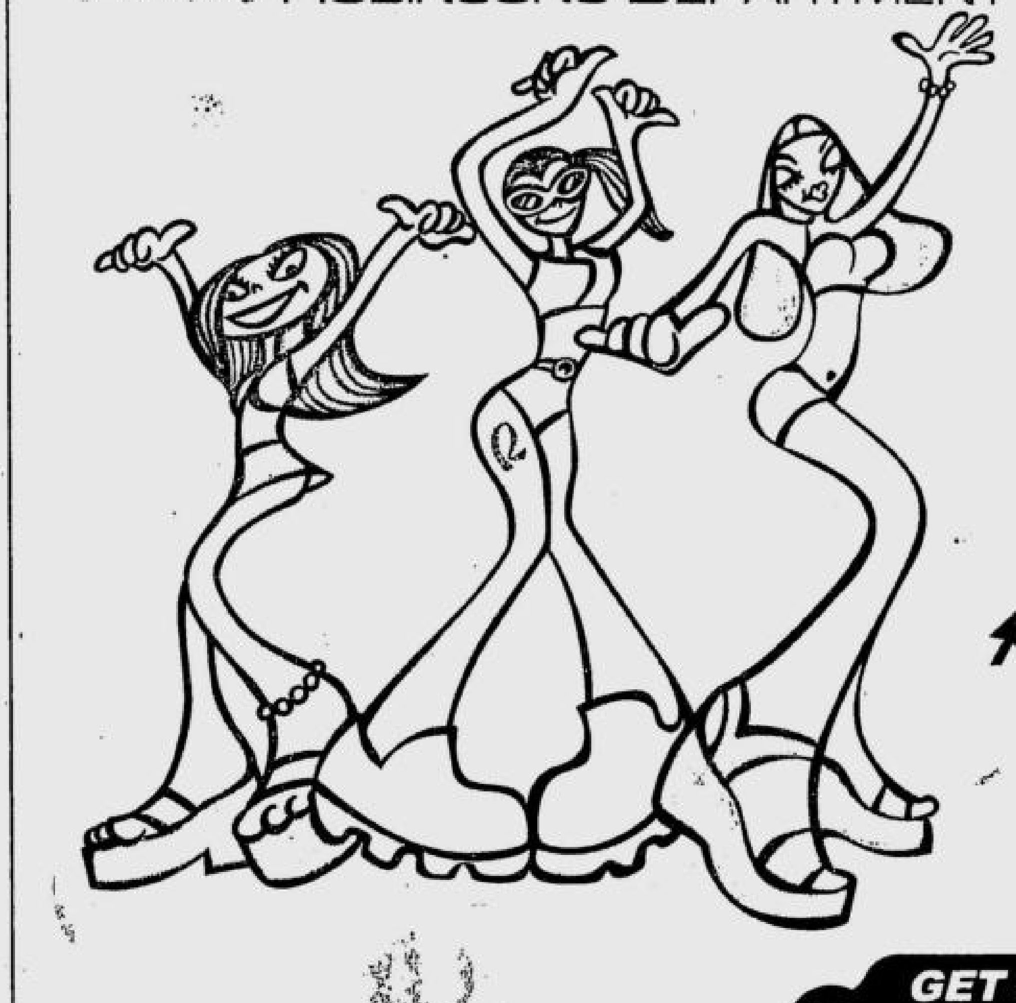
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2bU! goes to Banaue

(From page E1)

cap it off, the road leading to the town of Banaue is sprawled with sights of the fantastic terraces. And, of course, there is that luxury one can never seem to have in Manila: Fresh air.

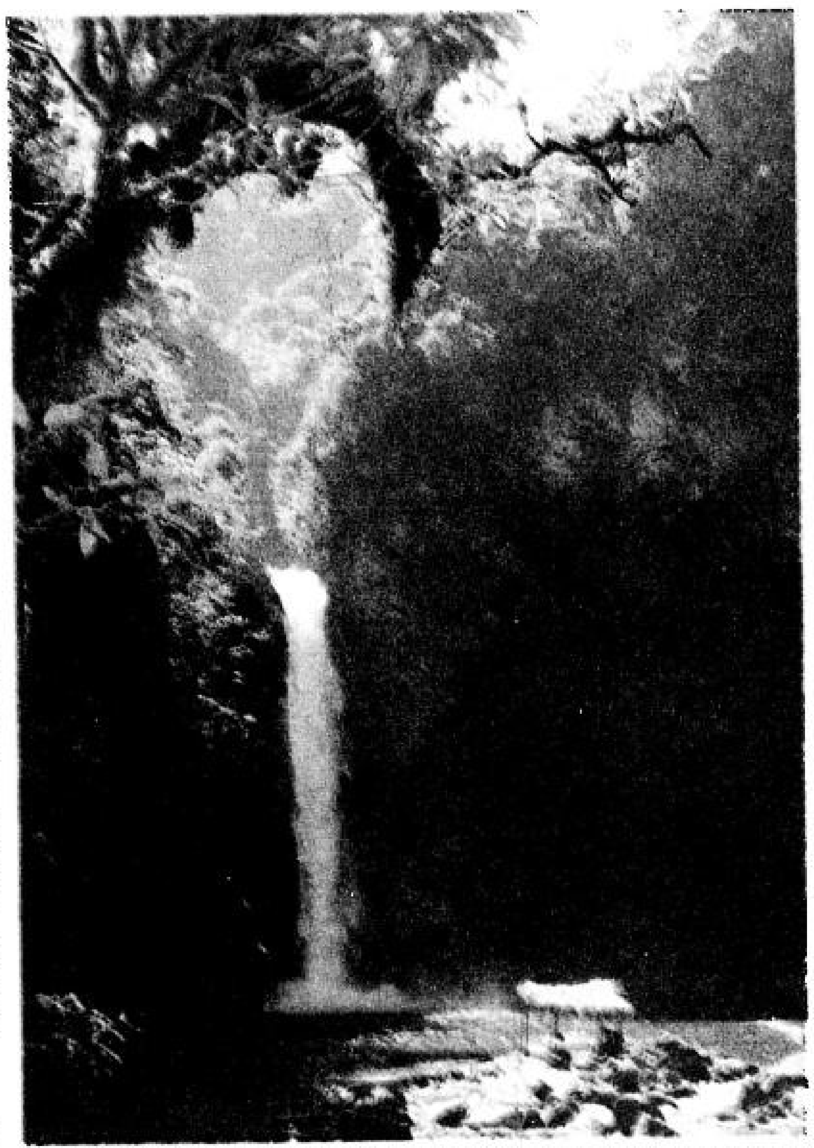
Gracious reception

We left for Banaue at 8 a.m. We got there at 9 p.m. We would have dropped dead-tired, sprawled all over at the lobby of Banaue Hotel, if not for the gracious reception of its general manager and staff. A cultural presentation was held later on in the night, where diners were treated to a relaxing feast by the pool. The Ifugaos showcased their dances. They were kind enough to educate us about their rituals and customs, especially in their manner of dressing. Even the spirits kept us awake the whole night (wine spirit, that is). Their red rice wine tasted warm in the mouth and had a roasted flavor in it. Of course, it helped that everyone felt the need to celebrate our arrival in one piece. Besides, we needed the jolt to help us in our eight-hour trek to Batad next day. We later realized that what we needed was more than a jolt. We needed new and improved fit bodies!

Batad is home to the amphitheater rice terraces. It is about 16 km away from Banaue, 4 km of that to be walked by foot, starting at the Batad junction. Jeepneys were everywhere and these would take you to the junction. Another common mode of transportation was the tricycle. The mountain trail, to be traversed by foot, is recommended only to strong hikers. Although it's not steep, and the road is not as harsh as, say, Sagada, the eight-hour hike could prove to be too much for the potato couch. Also, landslides occur quite occasionally: trails may get blocked so hikers would have to cross over boulders and pebbles. And, of course, it was not encouraging to hear these rocks falling over the ravine which was just next to your left. This was what the group experienced on that fateful day during the hike. But hey, that is what eco-adventure is all about—no limit to the thrills.

Uphill

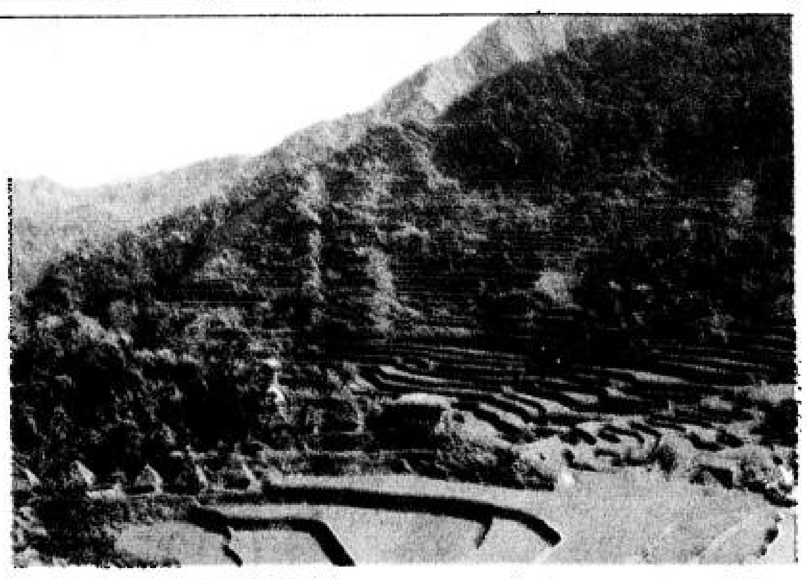
From the junction, everything was uphill, but thanks to the very cool mountain air, it didn't seem to be that difficult. Everything was breathtaking—the majestic view of nearby mountains and the exhausting trip toward the terraces. It provided a good opportunity for people to share their backpacking trips a few years back, and it took away the boredom of walking for several hours. A marker and a shed for hikers to rest in for a while represent the Batad halfway, which is about one-and-a-half-hours away from the junction. Batad is 4,200 meters above sea level, and again as expected, it offers one of the many views of the terraces along the way. Also, starting that point, sheds are available where friendly Ifugaos would share with you the much-needed information about places to stay overnight, travel must-haves and life as an Ifugao. They also have woodcarvings and souvenir items available in their sheds that are nice conversation pieces. A good two hours away is the Batad proper, where one could see the amphitheater, a Unesco World Heritage Site. It boasts of beautifully contoured rice terraces so wide and grand that the eyes (much less a camera) aren't enough to capture the whole image. Imagine that alongside imposing mountains and dainty native houses that stand till today.



GOD'S BEAUTY SHINES THROUGH. Majestic Tappia waterfalls do wonders to calm the spirits.

ECO-ADVENTURE participants cool off at the terraces.

If the rice terraces are the eighth wonder of the world, the hospitable people of Ifugao should be the ninth



PERFECT COMBINATION. Who says man and nature cannot coexist?

OLD AND NEW. In costume and in shades, the elderly still command a regal presence.

A CENTURY OF DREAM-WEAVING. This woman is 100 years, or so she says.

However, it doesn't take eight hours just to see the world-renowned terraces. As mentioned, they are sprawled all over Ifugao. One particular set of terraces can be found at Viewpoint, which is a 20-minute ride from the hotel. This is a perfect spot for picture taking as the terraces here have deeper magnitude. The other set (the same distance) is in Dianara, whose name is derived from former Miss Universe Dayanara Torres. She was in the exact spot six years ago, when she did a photo shoot for the Manila pageant back in 1994. Here, I find the terraces even more majestic, especially because you get to be on a plateau and freely take pictures from all angles.

Hospitality

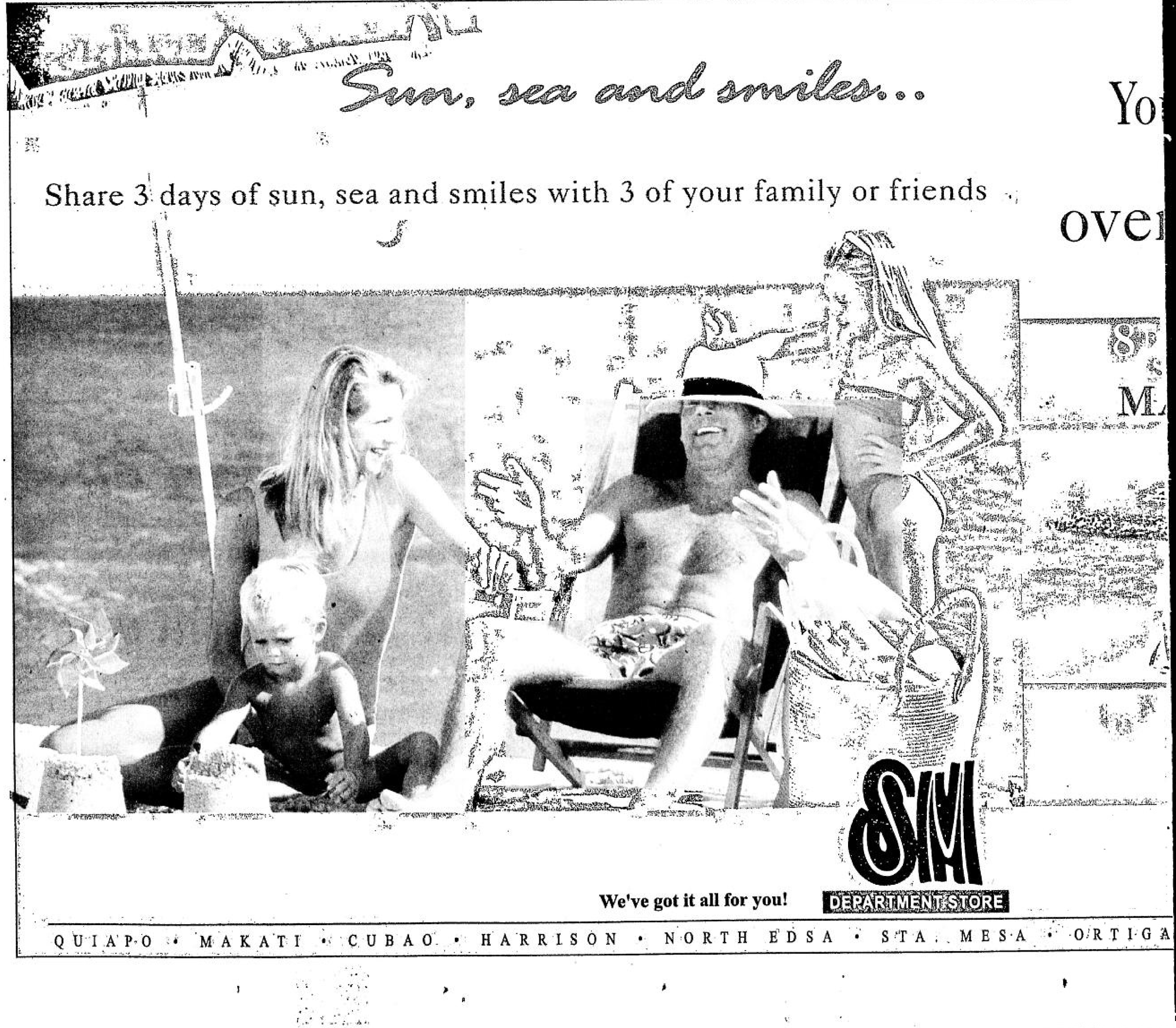
Ifugao folk have pretty much adjusted to tourists, as the people don't make a fuss about seeing foreigners. Instead, it is their hospitality more than their curiosity that shines through. Children gladly posed for photographs and smiled. With a piece of candy, they'd smile even more widely. The tour guides, particularly Charlie Dumpit (who was cited by "Lonely Planet's" guide to the Philippines as one of the best guides in the area), were willing to add extra help, even becoming porters in the process. Even traders weren't so bad in the area of haggling, being pleasant despite extreme price beg-off from us. Locals weren't hard to please; just deliver a joke or two and they'd let out a genuine laugh. They were well-educated, able to speak English and Tagalog aside from their native language. And if they weren't busy, they'd gladly bring out their weaving materials and showcase their talents right before your eyes.

Aside from colorful blankets and hand-woven bags, they also had a lot of beaded necklaces and bracelets, as well as woodcarvings that served as souvenir items. Their rice idol, the *bulol*, was probably the most common of all carvings and the price ranged from P80-1,000, depending on the size. These items, as well as other crafts and gift giveaways, could be found at Viewpoint and Trade Center (20-minute walk from Banaue Hotel), among other stalls and market places in nearby areas. Another sought-after item was the rice wine, which reportedly cost P65 in the market, way much cheap compared to those that were available in the hotels.

Those last few thrills were a surprise to me. As someone who had always been informed that Ifugao was just all about the terraces, I now conclude that I was misinformed. For aside from the architectural wonder, the people have left a very good impression on me. They who are the makers of the God's stairway to heaven.

For student and nonstudent tour packages to Banaue and other eco-adventure sites, call the Philippine Tourism Authority at 524-2502/2495.

Banaue Hotel may be reached at (074) 386-4087 to 88



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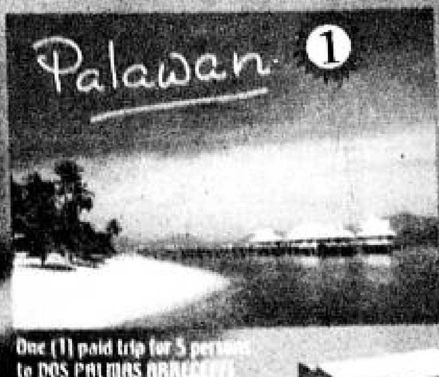

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